Baka to Tesuto to Syokanju Volume12

source : http://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php?title=Baka_to_Tesuto_to_Syokanju:Volume12

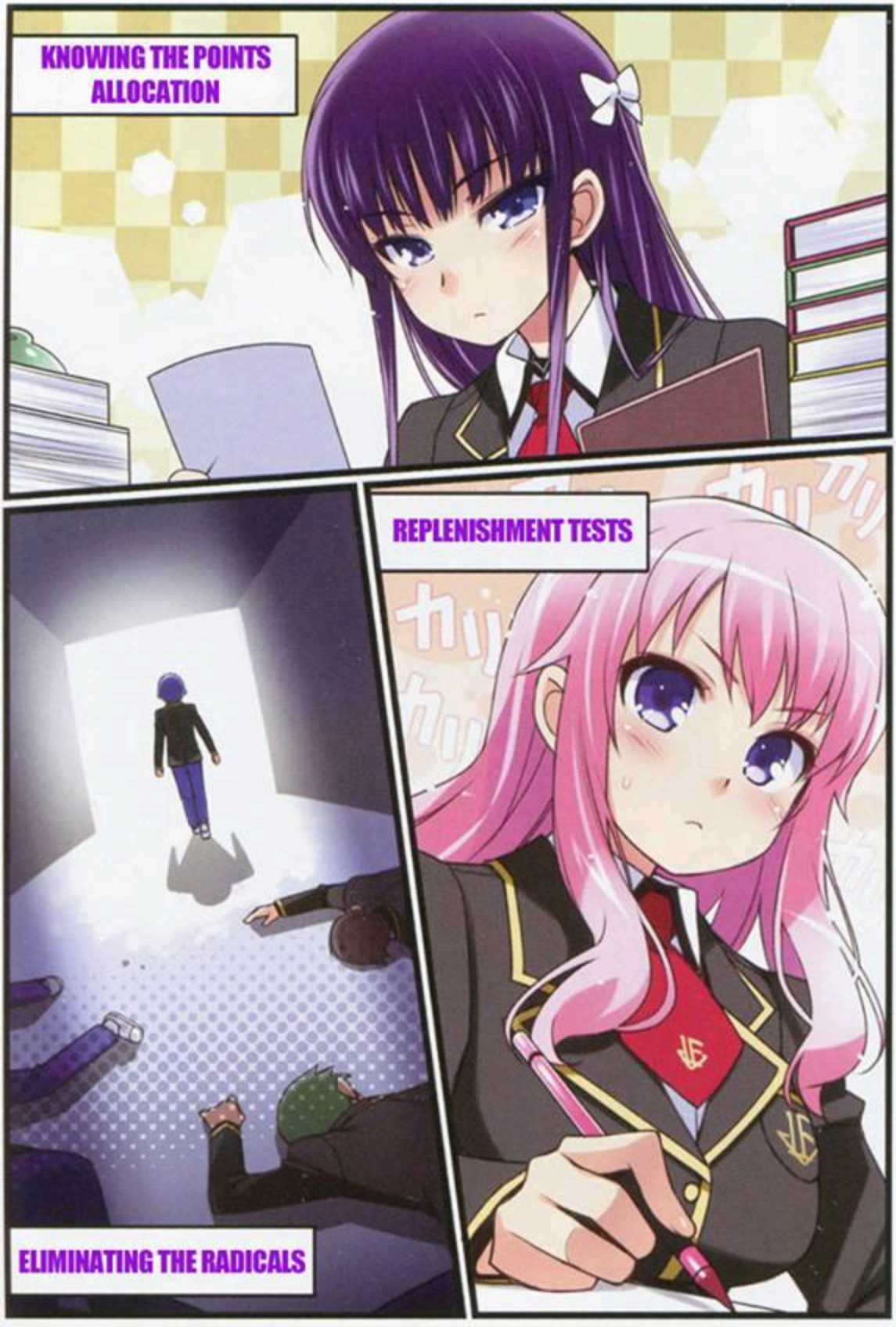
井上堅二
Kenji Inoue
バカとテストと召喚獣
12
ファミ通文庫

バカとテスト召喚獣 12
IT'S ALRIGHT NOW, SHOUKO-CHAN. SAKAMOTO-KUN WILL DEFINITELY FIND A WAY TO TURN THIS AROUND.
... YES.
姫路瑞希
Mizuki Himeji
霧島翔子
Shouko Kirishima
OK.
... LET'S GO WITH THIS.

OF COURSE.
CAN YOU DO IT, YOU GUYS?
坂本雄二
Yuuji Sakamoto
吉井明久
Akihisa Yoshii
'F COURSE.
... LEAVE IT TO ME.
土屋康太
(ムッツリーニ)
Kouta Tsuchiya
木下秀吉
Hideyoshi Kinoshita
.....

IT'S ONLY AT SUCH MOMENTS... THAT THOSE GUYS
SEEM PRETTY COOL THERE.
AHA HA HA I UN- DER- STAND TOO.
SO- SORTA
THEY'RE NOT TOO BAD.
島田美波
Minami Shimada
工藤愛子
Aiko Kudou
木下優子
Yuuko Kinoshita
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU GIRLS ARE SAYING,
OF COURSE, I'LL DO MY BEST TOO.
HOW CAN WE LET IT END LIKE THIS WITHOUT BEATING THEM ?
WHAT WILL WE DO THIS TIME ?
BUT YOU TOO HAVE THINGS TO DO.
DO YOUR BEST NOW.
AL- RIGHT, THEN--

LIMITING THE BATTLEFIELDS
DON'T RUN AWAY NOW!
WE'LL FIGHT AGAINST THEM HERE!
INSTRUCTIONS TO RETREAT
WE HAVE TO GIVE UP ON ALL DISADVANTAGEOUS BATTLEFIELDS!
EVERYONE!
RETREAT NOW!
KEEPING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION A SECRET
.....
THAT SAKAMOTO AND KIRISHIMA-SAN ARE TOGETHER NOW--
OI, I HEARD


KNOWING THE POINTS ALLOCATION
REPLENISHMENT TESTS
ELIMINATING THE RADICALS

WHAT ? WHAT ?
EH ?
I JUST THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE BEING A LITTLE COOL THERE ! HURRY UP AND APOLOGIZE NOW !
MUTSURINI-KUN I'M A LITTLE DISAP-POIN-TED...
... WHY.
HOWE-VER,

YOU GUYS ARE A LOT MORE SERIOUS THAN I THOUGHT.
AH
THAT'S TRUE.
NORMALLY, EVERYONE WILL DEFINITELY BE JEALOUS OF SAKAMOTO-KUN
AND THEN THEY'LL DO SOMETHING.
ERM...
WHAT DO YOU TREAT US AS NOW ...?
... THERE'S NO TIME TO DO THIS.
WHEN WE'RE IN SUCH AN IMPORTANT BATTLE.
PHEW

AHAHA. DEFINI-TELY.
BUT THOSE TWO HAVE A GOOD RELATION-SHIP NOW, RIGHT ?
... HM.
... LET ME HELP.
TO GATHER A LIST OF FIGHTING STRENGTH FOR TOMORROW'S BATTLE.
WHAT'S LEFT IS
... HOW NICE.
... SHOUKO-CHAN
YOU CAN HONESTLY TELL YOUR FEELINGS,
TO THE ONE YOU LIKE...
AND SO,
THE FIRST DAY OF THE SUMMONING WAR AGAINST THE 3RD YEARS ENDED.
Please cease all battles now.
The sum-moning war has ended for now.
ON TO THE BATTLE ! MAIN STORY GO !

バカとテストと召喚獣12

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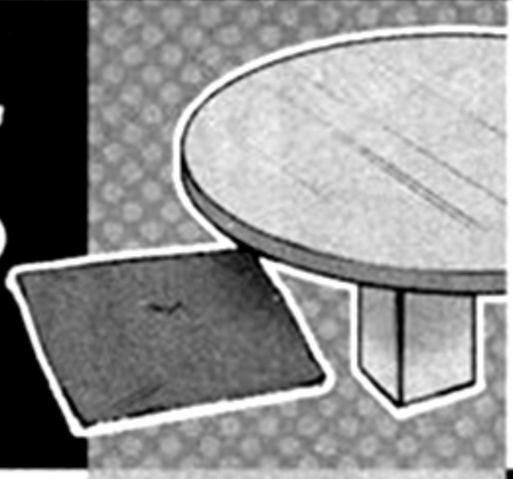


これまでのあらすじ★

学園長の強権発動により二年生に拒否権は無し。しかも負けた学年は勝った学年に設備を召し上げられるという。点数はともかく、なにより召喚獣の扱いに一日の長がある三年生相手に、二年生の不利は否めない。しかたなく各クラス代表で会議を行うことになった二年生だったが、「卑怯汚いは敗者の戯言」をモットーに勝ち抜いてきたFクラスへの風当たりは強く、頼りの雄二も主導権を得られぬまま試召戦争当日に――。

三年生の高城やFクラスに遺恨を持つ根本や小山の策略もあり、予想以上の苦戦を強いられてしまう明久たち。そして、あわや敗北かという劣勢の中、翔子とのわだかまりを解消した雄二の鬼策により、二年生は首の皮一枚繋がったところで試召戦争の一日目を終えようとしていた……。

Aクラスとの再戦中、勝利を目前にして水をさされてしまった明久たちFクラス。

留学生リンネの出身校からの「学年の隔てなく学校全体で設備を賭けて勝負すべき」という提案を受けた学園長と、日頃から二年生に不満を持っていた三年生との利害が一致し、「二年生に対する三年生からの宣戦布告」という形で、FクラスvsAクラスの試験召喚戦争は強制的に終了させられてしまった。

“…I’m sorry, Yuuji.”

“What’s the matter, Shouko? Why are you apologizing?”

“…Because I never trusted you, Yuuji.”

“Don’t worry too much over that small thing.”

“…Sorry.”

“Don’t apologize, okay? I’m wrong for remaining silent up till now.”

“…Alright.”

“Right, then forget everything about it.”

“…Yes, I’ll forget everything, so—”

“Hm?”

“…So, how did you intend to confess your feelings to me in the first place, Yuuji? Tell me about it some day.”

“ACK!? WHO’LL SAY SUCH A THING TO YOU!!?”

“…It’s alright. I’ll always believe and wait for you.”

“No no no! Even if you wait—s"

"…Didn't you say you'll tell me after winning this summoning war?"

"…"

"So, since I love you most, Yuuji, you have to come back with a win, okay?"

"……Isn't that line from you too despicable, Shouko?"

"…Un."

"You want me to speak up with such little coercion?"

"…Un."

"I'm really being looked down upon."

"…Un."

"……I'll tell you again when I feel like it next time."

"…I'll always be waiting for you."

The Tenth Question

Please answer the following question.

"Magnesium was used to create a cooking pot that is able to withstand heat and weighs lighter, but there is a problem when cooking. What is the problem here? Also, state an alloy that can replace magnesium."

Kirishima Shouko's Answer:

"Problem: Magnesium reacts violently with oxygen once it meets fire, and causes a hazard.

Alloy: Stainless Steel"

Teacher's Comment:

Correct Answer. Stainless steel is an alloy that includes nickel and chromium.

Tsuchiya Kouta's Answer:

"Problem: There is no stove burner available."

Teacher's Comment.

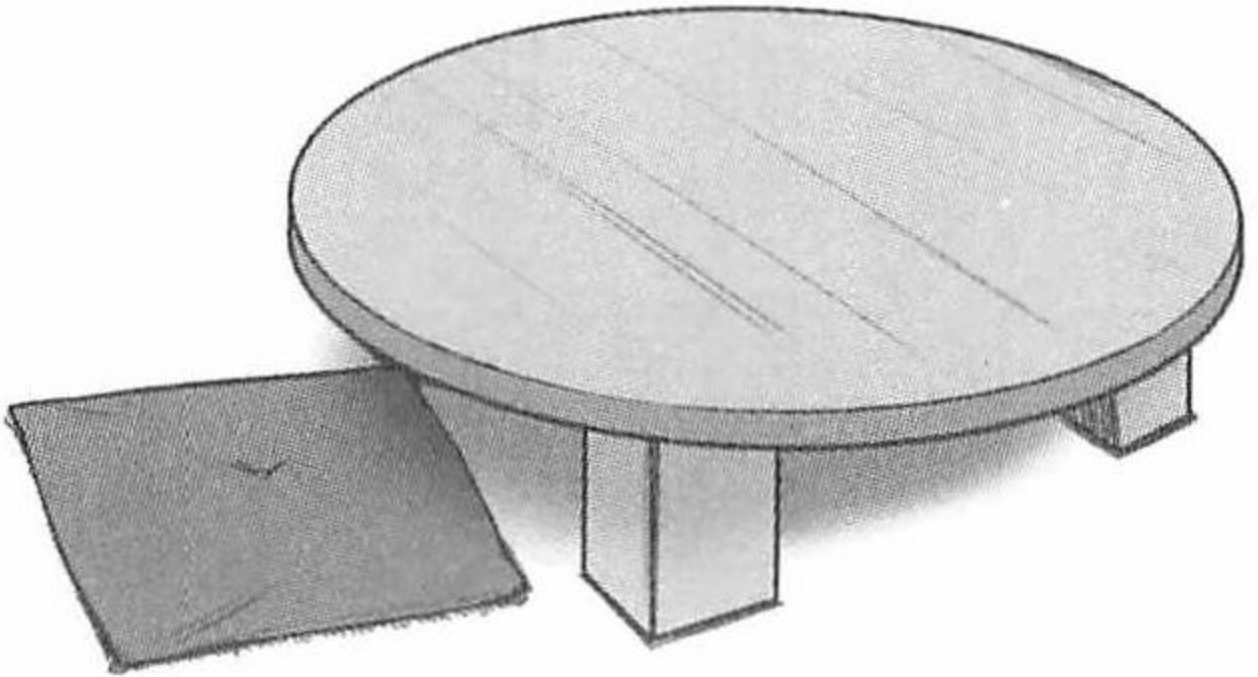
Can you not add a fire to it, even if it is a bonfire or something?

Yoshii Akihisa's Answer:

"Alloy: Alloy in the near future(super resistant to heat)"

Teacher's Comment:

You are sorely mistaken if you think adding the words near future can add some realism here.



"DIE—!!"

"Woahh!? That's dangerous!"

I use all my strength to execute a "Chopping Right"[1], only to miss. Tch! That bastard's instincts are as good as ever!

Once we safely meet up with Kirishima-san, we first return to the old school campus to ensure our safety, give up on some of the battlefield, and scale down on the battles. Soon after things have calmed down, the school bell chimes, and the first day of our summoning war against the 3rd year ends.

In other words, it's after school now…there's no problem if I get rid of Yuuji now!

"Let's go, Muttsurini."

"…No problems."

Having said that, Yuuji only has two hands, and if Muttsurini and I attack, he can't possibly hang on for long.

But right before Muttsurini and I get ready to attack Yuuji, *Goodness me,* Hideyoshi mutters as he stands up and stops us.

"I can't say that I don't understand how you feel, but you two should stop."

"Eh? Why're you stopping us, Hideyoshi?"

"…??? (Blinks)"

"Why are you guys looking at me with such innocent looks and confused expressions…?"

Because it's just that Yuuji chatting away with that Kirishima-san. There's no way we can leave him alone without ○○ and ×× him, you know?

"You guys…you started the flames already, but aren't you being too sincere there?"

Yuuji recovers his posture as he says blankly.

It's true that we're the ones who told Yuuji to express his feelings to Kirishima-san.

However,

"I never said that you're allowed to have such happiness, Yuuji"

"What do you want me to say then?"

As for what to say, I can only answer this way.

"After you confess to Kirishima-san and calm her down, get rejected."

"I'll be really embarrassed if that really happens…"

I do think that is an appropriate situation for Yuuji.

"Seriously. I still have to plan the strategy for tomorrow, so don 't distract me now."

Yuuji turned and summarizes the current fighting strength on the notebook. Well…since he says so, I shouldn't get in his way.

As Yuuji and I trade jabs at each other, the girls are standing around without us knowing, looking embarrassed.

"Erm…Sakamoto, sorry about that. We just said what we wanted without knowing what you're thinking."

"We're really sorry, Sakamoto-kun."

Minami and Himeji-san lower their heads.

"Sorry about that, Sakamoto."

"We're sorry about that, Sakamoto. We were too harsh."

Kudou-san put her hands together, looking really sorry, while Kinoshita-san looks away slightly as she apologizes.

"That sort of little thing doesn't matter. I don't mind at all."

In response to this apology, Yuuji merely waves his hand with annoyance.

"Besides, forget everything that happened if you feel bad about this. I'll be really grateful about that."

“““That’s impossible (you know)!”””

“You guys…”

But of course. Nobody can forget about such a shocking incident even if they want to.

“Your relationship will improve further before we forget about it, no?”

“Of course~ Prez looks the same as she usually does, no?”

“Yeah. And we have no reason to stop you two anyway.”

“That’s right. After that…”

“Please don’t look at me with those eyes, alright?”

That’s true. It goes without saying for Kirishima-san, but once she understands that Yuuji doesn’t hate her, there’s only one outcome left for those two.

“Is that so…Yuuji, you’re going to get married after this (summoning) war…?”

“Oi, stop it. Isn’t that a death flag normally seen in movies or something?”

This is the kind of touching ending, to die after passing on his feelings to his lover.

Kirishima-san listens in on us, and doesn't look very confident as she speaks to Yuuji hesitantly.

"…Erm, Yuuji, do you want to go out to the City Hall together after this…?"

"No way!"

It seems Kirishima-san wants to use the marriage request certificate she kept for a while.

"…So it's no good, after all…?'

"Of course not. I still have things to do after this. I can't possibly go with you."

"…"

After hearing these words from Yuuji, Kirishima-san lowers her eyes, looking very gloomy.

And so,

"…That's…right. I didn't trust Yuuji, I did something so stubborn. I can't go out with Yuuji…"

"I DON'T MEAN THAT GOING OUT!"

It seems Kirishima-san feels very guilty over doubting Yuuji just now as her voice sounds less lively than usual.

And Yuuji probably feels this way too, maybe? He scratches his head, and follows up,

"Goodness. I don't mean that! I'm just saying that I'm not going to the City Hall with you, alright!?"

Kirishima-san hears this, lifts her head to glance at Yuuji, and asks,

"…That means 'going out' is okay?"

"…"

What a beautiful counter.

Yuuji's unable to say anything for the time being, and grabs my shoulder while seemingly trying to escape from Kirishima-san's stare.

"O-Oh, Akihisa! Now's the time to go to your house to revise Japanese history, right? We have to hurry back and revise!"

"I'm fine, Yuuji! I can work hard on my own, you know?"

"What? No need to be so thoughtful! Your points are indispensable for our turnaround from now on!"

It's not too much to say that Yuuji's being very deliberate with how fast he changed the subject, but to be honest, it's really cruel for Yuuji to confess in front of everyone at this point.

On a side note, while what Yuuji said to change the topic just now may seem to be for show, but it is the truth. He's been helping me revise my Japanese history after our war against A class was interrupted.

"…I understand. In this case, I'll endure."

Kirishima-san readily answers, to my surprise, and I can't help but ask,

"Eh? Kirishima-san? You sure?"

The one wish Kirishima-san has been hoping for finally happens after 10 years. It's okay to enjoy a little bit at this moment, right?

"…It's alright. I caused a lot of trouble during the summoning war. It's to be expected for me to endure."

"Hm…I guess it's fine if Kirishima-san says so…"

It's already after school. There's no need to be so worried about it.

"…And I've decided not to be anxious."

"? Not to be anxious?"

"…Yes."

Kirishima-san nods her head slightly.

"…Because I believe in Yuuji."

She smiles as she says that, looking a little shy.

"…(Kick)"

"It hurts! What are you doing, Akihisa!?"

"…(Kick)"

"Muttsurini too!?"

"That's the happiness tax."

This kick alone isn't enough to pay for it, but I'll leave it as it is for today based on Kirishima-san's smile.

"Speaking of which, what ideas do you have for the most important summoning war, Sakamoto-kun?"

The serious Kinoshita-san changes the topic and asks Yuuji this.

Since Kirishima-san says that she'll endure this for now, I better stop teasing Yuuji and focus on the summoning war.

"Of course."

Yuuji immediately answers Kinoshita-san's questions.

"It might be a little too much coming from me when I haven't come up with any ideas…but is it really alright?"

"…We lost a lot of forces."

Kudou-san and Kirishima-san look uneasy as they give bleak looks, but Yuuji answers them, seemingly wanting to put their anxieties to rest.

"No problems at all, right?"

"Well, if Yuuji says so, it means there's no problem, right?"

"Think about our situation last time, the difference in battle strengths was a lot worse when we were fighting against you A class."

"…Same as usual."

"Yeah. I think the real battle starts here."

"We won't lose if it's just like that."

We're F class, we're already used to such overwhelming odds. I even think that we can't fight at our true strength because we started at the same line as our enemy.

"That's how it is. Are you a little more relieved now?"

Yuuji says as he gives a look.

"How do I put it? You guys are really amazing in some ways."

"You're more lively when you're at a disadvantage~"

"…How reliable."

A class starts laughing, seemingly amused by this.

"Then, we'll follow Sakamoto-kun's instructions."

"Right. Just tell us what you need."

YUUJI SAKAMOTO

"…I'll do my best."

We wasted quite some time, but this is where Yuuji's actual ability comes in. We won't be toyed with by the 3rd years, and it's time to counter.

"Watch me now. I'll rip those bastards good!"

And with this line from Yuuji, the first day of the summoning war against the 3rd year ends here.

The Eleventh Question

Please list a proverb for the following:

"1. You may fail at things you're good at." "2. One unlucky event after another."

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

"1. Even Kūkai[2] will make mistakes when writing." "2. When it rains, it pours.

Teacher's Comment:

Correct. Also, for (1), there is also another proverb, 'Kūkai can't choose pens'. A similar expression for (1) would be 'A kappa[3] can get washed away' or 'a monkey may fall from a tree'.

Similarly, for (2), there is a proverb 'a bee stinging on a crying face' as well. It will be helpful to memorize these together.

Tsuchiya Kouta's Answer:

"(1) A kappa can't choose a pen."

Teacher's comment:

You mixed the proverbs up because you can't differentiate between them?

Shimada Minami's Answer:

"(2) A bee sting on the eye."

Teacher's comment:

It does seem to hurt.

“Now then, what instructions do you have for everyone, Yuuji?”

It’s now the second day of the summoning war.

Once the class representative meeting ended, Yuuji returns to our base, 3-D's classroom and answers me.

“Nothing much, we have our F class members at the more intense battlefields, and then we sent D class’ guys and girls to the frontline separately. Finally, I requested for everyone to try and retreat as much as we can to lower the scale of battle.”

This strategic instruction doesn’t seem to be something too big.

Upon hearing this, Kinoshita-san beside me again asks Yuuji,

‘Is this really alright, Sakamoto-kun?”

“Ahh, it is for now.”

In this case, it seems Yuuji has prepared all these to execute the strategies later.

“…”

“What is it, Kinoshita sister? You look like you have a lot of ideas there.”

“I’m not unhappy about this…”

Kinoshita-san seems to be a little disappointed by this instruction. Maybe she's hoping that he would come up with some great revival.

Yuuji then continues to explain to Kinoshita-san,

"The enemy's forcing us to a point where we'll fail if we do something. We need to bring the tide to our side if we want to reverse the situation."

"Though you say that, aren't the 3rd years stronger than us if we compare our situations?"

"This is fact, but right now, we're inferior in ability, and also at a disadvantage right now. First, we have to think of a way in this situation."

"If there's a way, we would have—"

"And I gave this instruction so that everyone can fight at their actual ability."

Yuuji's instruction is simply just to create a good opportunity, and then we'll wait for everyone to recover, I think.

"We're not doing anything big even though it's an instruction."

"Anyway, just watch. You'll know later."

"…..If you say so. I guess I'll just watch without saying anything…"

It seems Kinoshita-san seems to be unhappy about something, but she's no longer asking Yuuji any more questions.

This time, Minami instead approaches Yuuji and asks him another question.

"Speaking of which, Sakamoto, didn't Nemoto say anything to you during the strategic meeting?"

B class' Nemoto-kun really humiliated Yuuji on the first day of the strategic meeting. It seems Minami's worried that he might be coming up with something else this time.

"Ah, I don't know why, but for some reason, he—"

"…Not around."

Kirishima-san answers, following up on Yuuji's words .

"Eh? Not around? That Nemoto?"

"(Nods)…Anyway, he did not attend the meeting."

"Oh my? Is that really the case? It's good for Prez and Sakamoto-kun, isn't it?"

While Kinoshita-san nods,

"Hmm…not around, huh…?"

For some reason, Minami's giving us a very suspicious look.

"What now, Minami? Why're you staring at us like that."

"We didn't do anything, we don't know anything."

"…A blasphemy of the highest order."

"I'd say I'm surprised to be so suspected."

Minami however ignores our excuses as she looks around the classroom for a little while,

"It's around here, right?"

She approaches the cabinet with the cleaning equipment inside.

And reaches her hand for that door.

Creaks……*Thud*

Nemoto-kun, bound and gagged, rolls out from the opened cabinet.

"Then, let me hear your reason."

""""Akihisa did it on his own!!!""""

"HOLD ON A MINUTE!"

Why's it that those 3 would gang up and call my name at such moments?

"That's not it. It's just an unfortunate incident, you know. Nemoto-kun just so happened to trip over when I was walking, and I just so happened to hold him down, and by chance, Yuuji passed by and sent a punch into his chest, and it's bad luck that Muttsurini and Hideyoshi just so happened to be nearby practicing their rope skills and—"

"Aki, don't think of passing this off with excuses like just so happened and by chance or something like that."

I still want to say the omnipotent line that anything can be rationalized no matter what. Looks like the effect will weaken if I say it too much.

"Speaking of which, I'm a little surprised that Kinoshita took part in this."

"Hm? Is that so?"

It's just like Minami has said; Hideyoshi rarely takes part in such unethical behavior.

"Yuuji's an important friend of mine, a buddy. It's a must to give an equal amount of payback after what Yuuji has suffered through."

Even so, Hideyoshi's not a saint himself; he'll naturally be angry if his friend is hurt, and will use force according to the situation. It can't be helped that Hideyoshi would gag Nemoto-kun and tie him up after he had already done such a thing .

"What? Don't worry about such a small thing. There's nothing in the summoning war rules that says that we can't knock out our ally."

"Yes yes. That's right. That's just an area between the grey and black."

"At least say that it's between black and white…"

I know I did something bad too, but even so, there's still something I have to take a firm stance on.

As we're talking about this, Minami looks around the classroom , and says,

"Speaking of which, I don't see Mizuki."

"Aiko's not here either."

"So is Kubo-kun."

Yuuji however answers their doubts.

"Yeah, those 3 are waiting behind the F class guys."

"…For what?"

"Must be to deal with any deserters."

"What are you saying, Yoshii-kun…how can there be such a thing?"

"That's one of the objectives."

"Are you serious!?"

F class has been used to fighting in the war, but even so, they often have to fight battles where they'll die if they don't go all out, so it's not a weird thing to see deserters.

"Your methods are really cruel. Even though you're classmates …"

"Let me tell you something good, Kinoshita. If you want to make use of the F class guys, don't hold back. If they know it's going to be a battle with 100% chance, the situation's going to be worse. It's for the better that I don't say anything."

And then, we kill off the deserters. That's really a terrifying rule .

"I say…if you're going to do such cruel things, I don't care if you get attacked by them during the replenishing tests, no?"

"Don't worry too much. The replenishing tests are held in a different place from the remedial room."

"Ah, that's true."

I guess Kinoshita-san has never been beaten in a test summoning war? She just accidentally mixed up the remedial room with the test replenishment room.

"On a side note, since we have a lot more people this time, there 's a chance they might be in the same place."

But in that case, there'll be tighter security; they won't be able to even whisper to us, let alone take revenge.

As we're explaining about this, the bell chimes, indicating the start of the lessons.

"Alright, the summoning war's about to start again. Get ready so that you can fight back anytime."

""""Roger that."""

And so, the second day of our war against the 3rd years begins.

"Th-Things are really going our way now…"

Kinoshita-san says with disbelief as she looks down from the top floor of the old school building.

"What's so surprising about that? Though you say it's going our way now, the thing is that they can't push us back now."

Yuuji says. It seems there's no improvement in the situation however, and the difference in strengths still remains.

"But I'm already surprised by this already…Prez and I tried our best to allocate our fighting strength, but we couldn't salvage the collapsing frontlines…"

Upon hearing Kinoshita-san mutter this, Yuuji answers as he stares at the strength report Kirishima-san's writing on.

"Most of the winning results in war is caused by pursuit. Do you know why?"

"I never heard of it before…but I understand what you're trying to get at."

"Leaving aside modern times, it seems during the era of bayonet warfare, the worst losses always arise from the moments when the losing side is being pursued."

I can understand what Yuuji means. Through my own experience, if it's a comparison of fighting the enemy head on or fighting while running away, the latter's a lot tougher to do.

"You guys made the correct decision to fight head on at the beginning, but because of this, the even strength between both sides…no, the 2nd years were overwhelmed slightly.."

"…Then, what is the problem?"

"Isn't it because of Nemoto-kun?"

"Yoshii-kun, I think you can leave that aside for now."

It seems Kinoshita-san really wants to find out how to solve the issue of this collapsing frontline once Nemoto-kun retreated. I guess that's to be expected of the studious A class.

"…We sent in our main forces, hoping to regain ground?"

"No, that's the correct decision."

It was the correct decision to send in all the fighting strength before the situation got out of hand.

"But that bastard Takashiro had the upper hand. When you attacked with the main force, he sent an equal number of forces."

That upperclassman's really devious, even though he's basically an idiot.

"I want to know the conclusion now, Sakamoto."

"Ahh, when you sent in forces and were unable to salvage the situation, didn't you start retreating in an attempt to limit the frontlines?"

"…Yes."

"That response back then was the wrong choice."

"Why do you say so? Isn't it reasonable for those with high scores to cover those with low scores in their retreat?"

Yuuji just said "the worst losses always arise from the moments when the losing side is being pursued." In that case, it does seem that there's no issues with letting the strong ones retreat last.

However…

"Those guys with high scores don't know how to retreat, since they aren't used to defeat."

The most important thing when fighting and running away is to defend. It is not about beating the enemy in front of them, but to retreat while buying time for their comrades to retreat. Experience, rather than high scores, is the important thing here.

"And after everyone got pursued, our formation collapsed, and we got forced back by the 3rd years. That's why the difference in strength between both sides just got bigger."

Basically, the scores are still the weapons used in this summoning war. In an ordinary exam, one may feel that this is merely a battle against oneself, but this is different. There are enemies, wins and losses; of course, it's disadvantageous to be overwhelmed by the enemy.

"Is that so? So you let the F class members stand at the front because they're used to defeat?"

"That's how it is."

"Then why did you separate the D class boys and girls?"

"The girls in that class dominate the guys, they're indomitable, and can't read the mood to save their lives. This means that they're not going to be suppressed by the 3rd years that easily. Besides, their experience in the summoning war is only less than that of F class."

F class and D class, normally considered scrubs, are able to fight on the frontlines, and that's because they rely on something other than points.

"I see…so once everyone sees the lower ranked classes fighting hard, they'll be able to calm down."

"…I didn't think that much."

Kinoshita-san and Kirishima-san are giving Yuuji impressed looks. This guy's really reliable in such moments.

"I do think I haven't done a lot yet."

"I do feel that you did plentiful though."

"Or rather, I might say that the real battle begins now."

"? What do you mean?"

"Just sit back and enjoy the show."

Yuuji got up from his seat as he said this, and observed the state of battle from the window in the front.

"Alright, perfect timing. Akihisa, are you done with those preparations?"

"Okay."

I grab onto the curtain dangling from the window, and open the window frames.

"Ready, 3, 2, 1…go."

"Hah!"

As according to Yuuji's instructions, I push the curtains out of the window. The curtain hanging on the rail floated in the air outside the window, expanding outwards.

And so, a blazing trail crosses through the battlefield immediately afterwards.

"Eh!? What did you just do, Yoshii-kun!?"

"I just gave a signal. The one attacking—I think it's Himeji-san's side and not Kubo-kun's."

I remember Kubo-kun's power is that of wind blades, right? I do have an impression of it, so the attack just now should be from Himeji-san's summoned beast.

"…A lot of people were caught in it."

Kirishima-san muttered.

It's just as she said; the trail of fire Himeji-san's summoned beast released caught a large number of enemies in it.

"Amazing…"

"Himeji's true ability is ranked 2nd amongst us second years after all."

"She's amazing too, but I'm talking about how the formation was used in this situation."

Kinoshita-san continues to stare at where the blaze attacked. There probably are a lot of enemies caught in the crossfire.

"…They were so wary of us back then."

"How did you gather the enemies together, Sakamoto-kun?"

"Well, this is part of our F class' characteristic—"

As Yuuji explains, voices can be heard from outside.

"SAKAMOTO YOU BASTARD! YOU INTENDED TO KILL US AS WELL, RIGHT!?"

"AND YOU EVEN SAID 'I'LL TRY NOT TO HIT YOU GUYS '!"

"YOU WERE FULLY AIMING TO HIT US, RIGHT!?"

“”…””

“—In terms of fighting strength, the guys from F class aren’t worth weeping over, even if they’re used as baits or pawns.”

“……Sakamoto-kun, I really can’t tell the difference between your methods and Nemoto-kun’s…”

Kinoshita-san said with a shocked expression.

Yuuji however took such criticism without flinching, and honestly admits,

“This is a fact after all. Both Nemoto and I are no different in the sense that we act on the same basis.”

The similar thing here refers to ‘gaining victory no matter the means’. In this sense, there’s no real difference between Yuuji and Nemoto.

But there’s a decisive difference between them, and that’s their understanding of the meaning of the word ‘winning’. Nemoto-kun thinks of personal victory. Yuuji’s idea of a win however is that of a team win. It’s because of such a major difference that even though us F class continues to be fooled by him, we still continue to follow his instructions. This is the idea of team victory we believe in.

“For some reason, you guys really have a weird sense of unity.”

“Really?”

"Yeah. The proof is that none of the F class guys got hit by it, right?"

"…They really believed."

If they truly believed that they were used as bait, doesn't that mean that both sides never trusted each other at all?

"Anyway, this is how it is in the end…Akihisa."

"Hm? What is it?"

"Call Himeji back to replenish her scores. After that, stay at the frontlines to lure the enemy's attention."

"I got it. I'll come back with Himeji-san once the order's given, okay?"

"No, don't come back. Stay there and fight."

"No way."

You still want to bluff me after all that explanation I just heard?

"What? Don't be so stubborn, Akihisa. Himeji used up a lot of points just now. There's no way the trail of fire will appear until she finishes her replenishment."

"I do see the second arrow in Kubo-kun being on standby, you know?"

In my situation, I'll be sent on a direct course to the detention room if I get a graze in anything other than Japanese History.

"Don't be stubborn, Akihisa. Shimada, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini are at their positions fighting hard. Is it fine for you to be here enjoying yourself here?"

"Though you say it like it's the truth, Yuuji, I find that there's a lot of wrong in that."

He's clearly demanding that I go over to sacrifice myself.

Since I'm unwilling to go, Kinoshita-san then advises me,

"Yoshii-kun, calm down a little. Your power is needed in the ' strategy' Sakamoto-kun talked about, you know? In that case, how can he possibly make you bait?"

"…Yuuji has always been dishonest."

"You're saying too much, Shouko."

I guess Yuuji probably feels very disgusted for giving me such special privilege…well, it's not like I don't understand that feeling anyway.

"In that case, I'll get myself fooled by you on Kirishima-san's account."

"Tch. Stop talking too much and hurry on."

"Yes yes. Got it."

I glance aside at Yuuji, who's not being cute at all, and run off to the schoolyard, where everyone's fighting.

"..."

I heard something rustle, and saw a curtain pushed out from a window on the 4th level of the old school building, fluttering in the wind.

""""DODGE!!!""""

"Tha...t, SCUMBAG!!!!"

The voices of the F class members can be heard from there.

Without thinking, I let my summoned beast, which I just summoned out, jump to the side. I'll kill you...! You bastard Yuuji!! I'll definitely kill you once this war is over...!

Immediately afterwards, several layers of wind blades catches the enemies over there, and passes by them.

This definitely is the power of the gold bracelet Kubo-kun's summoned beast has.

"Oh, Yoshii, you came!?"

“You were fooled too, comrade!?”

“Be careful! Focus 20% of our attention on the enemy and 80% on our allies at the back!!”

At the place Yuuji says is the most intense battlezone, the F class guys are all in a mess. Not taking into account that the damage dealt from the back rows is more than the front, it seems that they’re ferocious warriors in the frontlines, basked in blood.

“Ah, Yoshii-kun. It looks like you’re fine after all.”

A voice came from behind as I keep my guard up there.

“Ah, Kubo-kun.”

Standing over there is Kubo-kun, who just showed off his power just now, together with his summoned beast.

“Is it fine for you not to replenish the points you just used up?”

“Sure. I am to go crazy on the frontlines as much as I want; that’s what Sakamoto-kun said.”

Perhaps the term ‘go crazy’ doesn’t really suit Kubo-kun’s image, but this is what Kubo-kun himself had just said.

“Then, I shall go and come back, Yoshii-kun.”

Kubo-kun’s summoned beasts advances forward with its deathscythe in hand.

“You bastard!! I’ll send you to the remedial room!!”

“This second year!!”

The enemies that got lesser damage quickly attack Kubo-kun’s summoned beast.

Kubo-kun’s summoned beast however does not dodge the attack or use any fancy tricks as he swings a clean slice with the scythe.

3-F Fujishima Takeo, Language, DEAD

Vs

2-A, Kubo Toshimitsu, Language, 632 points

3-D Rikiishi Makoto, Language, DEAD

Vs

2-A, Kubo Toshimitsu, Language, 592 points

The Center Test is the basis, so the modern language and classics/ kanji subjects are all combined together.

As for the summoned beasts, one of them got sliced in half without being able to do anything, and the other managed to land

a hit after much difficulty, but was still hacked down by the scythe . Because of that, Kubo-kun's summoned beast took a little damage , especially when it didn't resist. However, the two opponents are definitely going to the remedial room.

This is how Kubo-kun fights; little things like dodging the enemy's attacks or feinting to get in and attack the enemy do not exist in his style of battle. His battling style is a simple contest of strength, a case of who wins or who gets beaten.

"I can't manipulate my summoned beast as skillfully as you after all, Yoshii-kun."

Kubo-kun had once said this with a laugh, but this is a battling style I can't imitate. It's a method of abandoning skillful manipulation and petty tricks, pumping in high scores on the summoned beast and using it to increase its strength. It was very threatening when we first fought each other, but now, it's very reliable when he's one our side.

"Hurry up and capitalize on this!!"

"Flank him from the sides, Shimamura!!"

2 third years again take on Kubo-kun's summoned beast. I guess that's to be expected of the 3rd years after all. Once they do that, Kubo-kun can only react to one side. Kubo-kun himself understands this, but isn't shaken in the slightest.

"It's embarrassing, but this is the only way to battle I know of."

He aimed his scythe at the enemy coming from the right, ignoring the attack on the left.

The enemy attacking from the right immediately defends itself once it understood the situation.

Kubo-kun's summoned beast continues on without hesitation as it swings the large scythe.

3-C Shimamura Tadashi, Language, 215 points

Vs

2-A, Kubo Toshimitsu, Language, 592 points

The enemy didn't get hit with a fatal blow as it focused heavily on defense. However, that's still a significant amount of damage.

And as for enemy on the left,

"Yo-You bastard...! I remember, you're that second year..."

"Ah, sempai, you actually remember me? Now I'm getting shy. "

3-C Matsuo Hiroshi, Language, 231 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Language, 142 points

It is in an intense battle against me.

“Eh? Yoshii-kun...?”

Kubo-kun looks slightly shocked as he stares at my summoned beast.

His style of battle is such that he has to stand at the front and fight alone so that he doesn’t get the people around him involved.

But it’s different now.

“Don’t worry, Kubo-kun. I can cover you.”

Since I’m already used to controlling the summoned beast, I can react according to Kubo-kun’s movements, and I can fight alongside him.

“Everyone else in F class can join in too.”

“What are you saying now, Yoshii!?”

“You want us to die too!??”

Everyone in F class is highly experienced in the summoning war, adept at controlling the summoned beasts. More importantly, their fighting strength is not worth crying over even if they get

caught in Kubo-kun's attacks. I guess nobody other than them can fight alongside Kubo-kun like this.

"...Thank you, Yoshii-kun, and everyone from F class."

This really isn't something worth thanking us for. We're all comrades now after all.

"Now I can focus on dealing with the enemies in front."

Kubo-kun showed a smile, and then turned forward, commanding his summoned beast to charge forward.

And then—

"Let us go too, everyone!"

""""Guess there's no choice, damn it!!""""

A class and F class are actually able to get along so well; the bonds between humans is truly inexplicable.

Thanks to Kubo-kun's massive contribution, the toughest frontline has been brought under control.

"That Yoshii's on the other side! We'll leave it to you, Natsukawa ! Tsunemura!"

"We can enter the school building once we break through there!"

"Go finish those damned brats off!"

I heard the third years saying such things.

"Yo-Yoshii."

"That's Kubo, am I correct? I heard you're rather capable."

"Ugh...the Toko-Natsu pair...!"

And so, the 3rd year pair, who we're very familiar with, are standing in front of us. If we're talking about them, they're a pair of seniors, one of them called Toko-whatever and the other called Natsu-whatever.

"Those are the upperclassmen who have been taking care of us, right?"

"Oh? Looks like you know about us?"

"That's impressive."

"Yes. How can I forget about you? You're the ones who wore a dress and wrote a poem to Kinoshita-kun during the test of courage tournament, right?"

Kubo-kun's words caused the nightmare hidden within my memories to be reawakened, and a nauseous feeling overcomes me .

However, I shake my head with all my might to cast aside this disgusting feeling. I'm fine! I definitely won't lose to this disgusting feeling!"

"Enough talk! Let's settle this, disgusting sempai!"

"Yoshii-kun, it's alright to go to the toilet if you feel like vomiting."

This is bad. My urge to puke has overwhelmed my mind.

"Se-riously, you bastard juniors are an annoyance, Yoshii...!!"

"We must really teach you how to respect seniority...!!"

Veins are bulging on the foreheads of the Toko-Natsu pair, and they shout while glaring at us.

""Summon!!!""

Language, 3-A, Tsunemura Yuusaka, 423 points.

&

Language, 3-A, Natsukawa Shunpei, 407 points.

Kubo-kun's eyebrows twitch a little the moment he saw the opponents' scores.

No matter how rotten they are, they are still A class caliber. They're science students, but it looks like they have impressive scores for language.

"Shall we go, Kubo-kun?"

"Well, I'll try."

Kubo-kun has used up quite some points for his bracelet just now. To be honest, it is really hard for him to take care of those two.

"Natsukawa! Take the smart one!"

"OK, Tsunemura!"

"Be careful, Yoshii-kun! They're aiming for you!"

"Stop it, Kubo-kun! This bad sympathy is more painful than anyone scolding me!"

The Toko-Natsu pair's challenging Kubo-kun.

Until now, Kubo-kun's summoned beast had the mentality of taking on anyone that stood in its way no matter what.

Kubo-kun's summoned beast swings its massive scythe as the mohican-sempai's summoned beast flies in. The enemy cleaves its sword upwards as it attacks.

And also, the other enemy, the baldy-sempai, lets his summoned beast duck low and charge in.

"Your actions are too obvious, you glasses bastard!"

The bald-sempai's summoned beast charges in ferociously with its sword pointed forward.

"Don't even think about it, you disgusting sempai!"

I let my summoned beast swing its wooden sword from the side to intercept.

"Yoshii-kun!"

"I'm fine here, Kubo-kun!"

In response to Kubo-kun's signal, I lower my summoned beast slightly.

After that, his scythe makes a loud swoosh, ripping through the winds as he slices his way through.

"...Ugh!"

"You bastard...!"

The Toko-Natsu's summoned beasts are on the defensive this time; though they used their weapons to block the attacks, they were still sent flying away.

"Let's continue."

He launches another 3 scythe attacks, and the Toko-Natsu pair could only jump back to increase the distance.

"You're not getting away!"

My summoned beast managed to regain its balance, and swings the wooden sword at the baldy-sempai's summoned beast. It's unable to dodge completely because of its posture, and the wooden sword grazes the tip of the shoulder.

Language, 3-A, Natsukawa Shunpei, 389 points.

Vs

Language, 2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, 142 points.

The points showed a slight amount of damage.

"Yoshii...! You're really getting on my nerves, you bastard...!"

"I'll take that as a compliment, sempai."

The baldy-sempai clicks his tongue furiously as he glares at me.

"Natsukawa, watch out! It's coming for you!"

"Damn it!!"

Kubo-kun didn't stop even when we're attacking each other, and he swings the scythe down without thinking of defending himself.

"It isn't good to forget about me like that, sempai."

I swing my wooden sword extremely hard at the baldy-sempai so that he can't focus completely on Kubo-kun.

The baldy-sempai's summoned beast blocks my attack in annoyance, and I leap up high in response to his movement, blocking his line of sight.

After that, Kubo-kun swings his scythe at the baldy-sempai's summoned beast.

"What...!? You're annoying!"

The baldy-sempai's sword managed to block the sword at the last moment. I let my summoned beast move quickly, while Kubo-kun continues with his attacks as we continue to hold off baldy-sempai's summoned beast.

"This is frustrating...! Yoshii! Fight me like a man!!"

"Calm down, Natsukawa! You're getting caught in their pace!!"

Right now, I shouldn't be attacking. The best way now is for Kubo-kun to exert his strength as much as possible.

"Shut up Tsunemura! I must break this wimpy attack head on!"

"Natsukawa...damn!"

As the bald-sempai charged in rashly, the mohican-sempai provides cover for him.

I continue to assist Kubo-kun as I fight the Toko-Natsu pair.

This situation continues for a little while, and I hear a familiar voice from behind.

"Leave it to us, Kubo!"

"Kinoshita and I will take over. Go replenish your points!"

Minami and Hideyoshi came to provide support. Since Kubo-kun had used his bracelet, we can't let him continue to fight here.

"Shimada-san and Kinoshita-kun? I'll leave it to you then."

""Summon!""

Once he saw that the pair's summoned beasts have entered, Kubo-kun escaped to the old school campus.

Language, 2-F, Shimada Minami, 94 points.

&

Language, 2-F, Kinoshita Hideyoshi, 257 points.

"...Minami, what's with that score?"

"Shut up! That's why I came along with Kinoshita, right?"

Though I said that, Minami's language score too has actually increased as well. If wasn't rare for her to have a combined score of 30 in modern language and classics during our first year.

"Stop looking down on us...! Your attacks are only so paltry without that bastard's attack power!"

Because of Kubo-kun's retreat, the bald-sempai continues to attack again. He attacks Minami's summoned beast without the mohican-sempai providing cover. It looks like he has abandoned the formation they used against Kubo-kun.

"Die, you bast...!"

The baldy-sempai's unable to pronounce the words correctly as he yells and attacks. My summoned beast dodges the attack, and swings the sword down hard unlike before.

"Ugh...!?"

His summoned beast could not withstand this attack, probably not expecting this full-powered attack. I then seize this opportunity to send a kick at his jaw from below.

"Y...ou..."

My summoned beast doesn't stop however, and once it slams into him, it uses the wooden sword to poke the middle of the forehead. The enemy barely managed to block this attack with its weapon.

Language, 3-A, Natsukawa Shunpei, 342 points.

Vs

Language, 2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, 142 points.

The reduced points from the attack was shown.

"Hideyoshi, Minami!"

"Righto!"

"Okay!"

Hideyoshi and Minami's summoned beast charge in, swinging their weapons. There's no way the baldy-sempai's summoned beast can avoid these attacks after being sent flying by my summoned beast.

"As if I'll let you."

Of course, the mohican-sempai won't let this happen; his summoned beast chases after us.

"Double!"

I summon the second beast to obstruct the mohican-sempai's attack.

"You're annoying!!"

His summoned beast swings its weapon, the halberd at my second beast, trying to shake me off.

My second beast ducks to dodge, and follows up with a sweeping kick.

"You bastard...!"

Though his summoned beast did not take any damage, it stopped in its tracks.

Language, 3-A, Natsukawa Shunpei, 201 points.

Vs

Language, 2-F, Shimada Minami, 94 points.

&

Language, 2-F, Kinoshita Hideyoshi, 257 points.

The additional damage done by Minami and Hideyoshi's attacks on the baldy-sempai was shown. He managed to defend himself, but we're successful in reducing his points.

"Damn you! You're using numbers now that Kubo isn't here!?"

The baldy-sempai was trembling in rage, his face completely red.

"Calm down and pull yourself together, Natsukawa!"

"Shut up!"

The baldy-sempai's so angry he can no longer see what's around him.

"Listen, Natsukawa!"

The mohican-sempai grabs the other by the shoulder, and emphasizes strongly.

"We can't beast Yoshii in such a situation. Let's fall back and replenish our points."

"Tch...!"

The baldy-sempai bit his lips as he saw his indicated score.

And then, he gritted his teeth.

"Yoshii, whatever I owed you till now, I'll pay it all back in this war!"

Once he said this, he swapped places with another person, and went to the new school building.

The enemies taking over cautiously kept their distance from us, allowing us to heave a sigh of relief.

"Phew...managed to chase them away."

"Looks that way."

It seems the Toko-Natsu pair is an important fighting strength to them; having chased them away, the enemy's attacks have eased up.

"Anyway, Aki, Sakamoto has given you some new instructions. Do you have some time?"

"Ah, yeah."

Minami deliberately hushed her voice, seemingly fearful of others hearing her as she looks around.

Having seen her do this, Hideyoshi suggests.

"Well then, Akihisa, there's no time for you to replenish your points, but how about you go take a rest with Shimada?"

Hideyoshi's meaning is that it'll be troublesome if the opponent is to overhear us, and that we have to be careful. I'm a little tired after focusing so much effort on controlling the summoned beast, so I'm really grateful for this suggestion.

"I'll do as you say then."

"Sorry for leaving you so quickly after arriving, Kinoshita."

"Well, don't mind about that. You'd have to continue working hard after this."

D class, which was on standby, takes over from us, so Minami and I retreat from here.

"So Minami, what's the plan?"

We left the frontlines, and started to chat near the corridor of the old school building. There's no worry that the 3rd years can overhear us here.

"Erm, you know the plan for Mizuki and Kubo to use the bracelets?"

"Yeah."

"When they use the bracelet again, Sakamoto will also be on the frontlines. Just follow them from behind without calling out your summoned beast, and get ready to go."

Right now, the situation has more or less stabilized, so we're proceeding with the next plan? I don't know what he wants to do, and it's definitely not going to be pretty. I better be careful from now on and not use too many of my points.

"Got it Minami."

"I told you all these already, so don't think too much about winning that you forget about the plan, okay?"

"I'm alright."

I'll get scary thoughts if those bracelet attacks happen again anyway.

"Anyway, now that I heard of the plan, I'll go back to where Hideyoshi is--"

"Wait, Aki."

The instant I try to return from this corridor to the battlefield, Minami grabs me by the hand. What now?

"Anything else you had to tell me?"

"Ah, erm, it's not about the strategy."

"? What is it then?"

"Erm, well, that, I guess, huh?"

Minami's attitude changes completely as she starts to panic. What's going on? This isn't like her.

"Argh seriously...! I already decided that I want to say it now. Why am I being so flustered...?"

This time, she turns her back on me and mumbles to herself. Is this really something that difficult to talk about?"

"Erm, Minami, I'm not sure what's going on, but it's fine that you calm down and tell me later if you're anxious about it."

"Y-Yeah, I did think of this before. I'm scared that you'll be distracted if I say something strange in this important battle, Aki."

Since she's thinking about whether she wants to say it now, I guess it's something that puts her in a dilemma or something?

"But if someone else is going to spill it out, I better make a promise before I regret it..."

Minami seems to be whispering something, and she turns around, looking like she made up her mind as she looks at me shyly.

"Erm, Aki."

"Ah, yeah, what is it?"

"I got something important to say to you once this summoning war is over."

"...Oho."

Why? Why is it that I feel that either Minami or I will die in this war when I hear this line?"

"Erm, Minami? In movies, those--"

Those are basically death flags. The moment I was about to say this .

"..."

I'm stumped by Minami's ridiculously serious look, and can only swallow my words.

"Erm...what's that important thing about?"

"Very important...more important than anything else to me."

These words don't seem to be a lie, and Minami's expression conveys these words as well.

In this situation, I can only answer seriously.

"Got it. It's a promise. I definitely won't forget about that."

"Yeah. Please."

Minami's showing an expression more serious than anything else I have seen. Is it really that important? I guess it is that important if she's worried that I'll falter in this summoning war if I hear it.

"Sorry about it, Aki. How about we return to the war?"

"Sure."

After making a promise about something, Minami and I again return to the frontlines.

The Twelfth Question

Please fill in the appropriate word in the following blank:

"Dust piling up like ( )

Himeji Mizuki's Answer:

Dust piling up like (a hill)

Teacher's Comment:

Correct.

Tsuchiya Kouta's Answer:

Dust piling up like 'garbage'.

Teacher's Comment:

I see.

Yoshii Akihisa's Answer:

Dust piling up like 'large garbage'.

Teacher's Comment:

So we can treat it as normal garbage if we divide it up?

YUUJI SAKAMOTO

"""DODGE---!!!"""

The instant we saw the curtain being flipped, we quickly retreated from the middle of the battlefield to the sides.

After that, several large blades of wind flew in from behind, where we once were.

"You alright, Akihisa?"

"Yeah. It's the second time already, so we're kinda ready for it."

Since we knew the meaning behind the curtains, we more or less managed to predict it, so it is more or less easy for us this time.

"It looks like the other guys are alright."

"Seems that way."

There have been attacks using the power of the bracelets coming from behind; this is the second time I saw it, and the third for the rest. Of course, there are few losses, both for us...and the enemy.

"It looks like the enemy has understood our intents."

"Those observant ones probably picked it up, huh?"

Our allies, except for those on the frontlines, understood the secret regarding the curtain, but the enemy's not stupid. They may

be shocked for the first time, realize it the second time, and believe it will happen at the third time. There might be someone amongst them reading our intentions.

"I'll be worried if they didn't. This is what we're aiming at."

"Hm, Yuuji, you're here."

While we're talking, Yuuji, in charge of leading the operation this time, walks to us. Goodness, this guy's strategy is endangering us again.

"Ya, Yuuji, you just bluffed me again."

"Oh Akihisa, you just got bluffed by me again."

Yuuji doesn't look apologetic at all.

Speaking of which, he did say something, 'just go while thinking that you're being bluffed' during a previous summoning war. We really got bluffed as a result back then.

"Don't you feel guilty bluffing me over and over again?"

"Haven't you gained any learning ability after being bluffed over and over again?"

Ugh...! This bastard's answers are always like that!

"Yuuji, you should be careful of what you say now. It's not wrong to say that your fate is in my hands."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, well, that. If I say that your relationship with Kirishima-san has evolved...well?"

If everyone in F class is to know about this, Yuuji's destiny will definitely come to an end.

In response to my words,

"Humph...how naive."

Yuuji merely scoffs it off leisurely.

"Where's that confidence coming from...?"

"No matter whether you say it or not, those girls won't just keep quiet about it, right?"

I was completely speechless.

"Th-That...doesn't that mean that my plan to reveal everything after my execution is useless...?"

"It's going to be an execution either way."

"I'm not shocked about it since I more or less expected it."

Guess I have no choice now. I'll just enjoy myself by being executed alongside everyone else. Hopefully, this will be a happy execution to celebrate our victory.

"Instead of that, we need to plan ahead. Akihisa, Hideyoshi, return your summoned beasts and come here."

If we're returning our summoned beasts now, it means we're going to move somewhere. If it's a battle to decide victory, that means we're going to where Takashiro-sempai is, right?

"Got it. Will be there soon."

"Me too."

After checking the enemies and allies on the frontlines, Hideyoshi and I exit the field, removing our summoned beasts in the process, and return to where Yuuji is.

"We're back, Yuuji."

"How about explaining the strategy?"

"Ah, wait a moment. They're coming soon--oh, here they are."

I look over to where Yuuji's looking at, and see Himeji-san, Minami, Muttsurini and Kudou-san coming out from the school.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"Why does it feel like I've been waiting for orders the entire day ?"

"...Ready to go."

"Since Muttsurini-kun and I are being called out now, it means that health education is going to be involved, right?"

Kudou-san's with us along with the usual F class members. Maybe this means that it's not a defensive battle to buy time this time.

"Yuuji, have you thought of a plan to win this?"

Having thought of the same thing as me, Hideyoshi asks.

In response to that however, Yuuji simply answers,

"Nope, not at all."

""""Huh?""""

We answer immediately without thinking. He can't think of a plan...?

"Then why did you summon us here?"

"Do we have to strengthen our defenses?"

"But I heard that this is a plan to end the summoning war?"

In response to our doubts, Yuuji gestures for us to quiet down, and answers nonchalantly,

"It's not important for us to win this summoning war. You know what this means?"

"No, not at all."

"That was a quick answer."

"Can't you use your head a little...?"

Then I'll think about it a little.

What's important to us for this summoning war...? The aim of the summoning war is to get the other class' facilities, and it's important for us to get A class' facilities. That's why we've been declaring war over and over again.

But this summoning war is different. The third years started it, hoping to get 'the facilities of classes A to C', and we just so happened to be against it.

In other words--

"We never wanted this summoning war in the first place."

"That's right. We never wanted to beat the 3rd years at all."

"Yeah. In other words, a draw's basically a win for us."

While it may be nice to get 3-A's room, it is the same for them if they can get 2-A's facilities. Looking at this disadvantageous situation, it'll be great if we can get a draw out of this.

"If that's the case, Yuuji, since it's not a plan to beat Takashiro-sempai, it's a plan to get a draw, right?"

"That's how it is."

Yuuji nods confidently. Couldn't he just say it right from the beginning? Why explain things in a roundabout way?

"But Yuuji, how're you going to force a draw?"

Hideyoshi asks about the most important thing, the battle itself, and Yuuji answers the question unabashedly,

"We're going to destroy the machine managing the test summon beast system and end the war."

"Well...this feels like a strategy only Sakamoto will come up with..."

Minami's right. Such an unscrupulous plan is something only Yuuji can think of.

"But Sakamoto-kun, if we're to simply end the summoning war, won't it be started again once it's repaired?"

Kudou-san, who's been listening to this obediently, raises her hand to ask.

"No, there's only a small chance of that."

"? Why's that."

"Our opponents are the 3rd years, and there's a foreign person observing everything here."

Then, what's that about?

While I'm shaking my head in confusion, Kudou-san, standing beside me, claps her hands.

"Ah, I see. This is a serious situation for both parties. They can't back out now."

"That's how it is, Kudou. The foreign sponsors sent someone to investigate because they want to know the results sooner. The 3rd years have their exams, and if the system is repaired even a month later, they won't have the time to start another war again."

I see. Even if the war somehow starts again, there should be some people being too busy. No doubt it's going to be beneficial to us.

"Also, there's not much merit for them to get the facilities a month later."

It seems Minami has more or less understood the situation as she starts to nod away.

How many people can actually get serious about this when the self-attendance period is just around the corner? The answer is really simple.

"Because of those reasons, we may be able to end this if we delay this summoning war. That's why we have to do something about that test summoning system."

"Oh, so there's this way of looking at things too?"

Yuuji has a flexible mindset capable to thinking beyond winning and losing, and this certainly is like his usual self--no, proof that his thinking has evolved beyond that. That lost mindset he had the previous day will never have thought about it.

"We understand our objective now."

"Now's the issue of executing it."

"Yeah, I'm about to explain that now."

Yuuji pulls out a loosely drawn map from his pocket.

"This is a map of the ground floor of the new school building. Since everyone's been there so many times, we all know where the principal's office is, right?"

"Of course."

"Actually, Yoshii-kun, I don't think any normal person will be called to the principal's office so many times."

The principal's office is located on the ground floor of the new school building, facing the field. This should be basic knowledge.

"The enemy general has made his base at the 4th level of the new school building, and the enemy has set defenses around it accordingly. In other words--"

"We'll blow the principal's office along with the entire new school building."

"Yoshii-kun? What're you saying!?"

"--And if we're lucky, we'll get many of the 3rd years caught in the explosion instead of just one."

"You too, Muttsurini-kun?"

"I want to do it too if that's possible, but that's impossible now."

Too bad huh? If only we had the fireworks from the school festival.

"Aiko, you'll get tired playing along with Aki and Sakamoto's jokes. Better to just let it fall on deaf ears."

"I-Is that so..."

"Anyway, Sakamoto-kun, what are the details exactly?"

It seems Minami and Himeji-san are both used to our words. I really hope they don't misunderstand though; if it's possible to carry it out, we'll really consider and look into it.

"Since everyone's focus is on the 4th level, there's no security at the ground floor surrounding the principal's office, so we can enter there using the back door.

We already experienced personally how heavy the security is around the 4th level, but the principal office on the ground floor should be okay.

"All that's left is to start a large performance there--"

"And we'll destroy any area that may contain the system."

“That's how it is. If we can get inside the principal office and start a battle, we just need to wreck the old hag's computer.”

Now that I think about it, the principal does use the computer in her room to control the system. Even if the host computer is located somewhere else, it takes time to restore the system, and it's going to be troublesome.

“Erm...won't you be lashed out harshly if you do that, Akihisa-kun?”

“The only way to prevent that from happening is that Akihisa has to make it look like an accident.”

“You guys are already used to doing this, huh?”

“Well of course. That's what we always do.”

“Though this really isn't something to be proud of.”

“What? Don't worry about it too much. Our wish to beat A class has gone down the drain. This is just a little payback.”

Leaving aside the motives behind our grudge, we at least understand what we're aiming at. Now we just have to split the tasks.

“Of course, Akihisa will be the culprit.”

"Hm, okay."

"You're making it sound so dangerous by calling him the culprit..."

I agree with those words.

"Himeji will work together with Akihisa as escort. If the only enemies inside are from A class, you're the only one who can fight them."

"I-I understand."

"I'll work along with you too. If the teachers aren't around, I have to open a field."

With no enemies or teachers around, Yuuji will have to create a field using his bracelet. This really is much easier for me.

"What about us, Sakamoto?"

"Please be our guards until we reach our destination."

"...Roger that."

"It's comforting knowing that I'm going to be with Muttsurini-kun♪."

Her jaw might drop if she sees any of his scores other than Health Education, but I think we'll just ignore that for now.

"The others will create a commotion as our cover. Since we're going to use a lot of fighting strength, they will have to respond in kind."

We can say that we'll be in a pinch if this fails—but well, isn't that the basis of strategy?

"Ah, one more thing, Akihisa."

"Hm? What is it, Yuuji?"

"I got something to say to you."

Yuuji waves at me, and I lean my head towards him, doing as what he told me; he then proceeded to brief me on several possibilities that might happen once we reach our destination.

"Hm...I see. That's what you were planning?"

"That's what I observed regarding the enemy's strength as a neutral. I'll leave it to you."

"Gotcha."

After those words were said, the strategy briefing ended.

Yuuji clapped his hands, and then said to everyone.

"Alright. Let's begin this plan. Once we see the hint, everyone's to run straight ahead."

"What's the hint, Yuuji?"

"The hint's that hint. You've seen it a few times, right?"

Yuuji looks over at the old school campus. Ah, so that's how it is ?

"That's not just something meant to wear out the enemy effectively, huh?"

"You really are good in this aspect, Yuuji."

"...To be expected of you."

So that's why we took quite the terrible punishment just now, huh? If us at the frontlines are to act without knowing anything, the opponent will probably fall for it. So this is what it means to fool oneself before fooling the enemy, I guess.

"Well...I guess it's about time."

We remain where we are, awaiting the hint.

And so, after waiting for a while, the white curtain from the window on the 4th level appeared.

"It's Kubo! Kubo's here!"

"That thing from before is coming again!!"

"Dodge!!"

Warnings could be heard from the 2nd years—and the 3rd years too. I guess this is what Yuuji's aiming for.

“Let's go, you guys! Let's charge right through!”

“““Alright!!”””

On Yuujis command, we run for the open path right in front of us. Having witnessed the attacks of the gold bracelets beforehand, the 3rd years dodged aside, forming a path. At this instance, it is possible to break through the sturdy defenses in front of the new school building.

Suddenly, I notice Kirishima-san standing at the window of the old school building.

She's looking at us, moving her lips, seemingly saying something.

“Do” “Your” “Best”

"..."

"What's with you, Akihisa? You're glaring at me like there's a family feud between us."

"...It's nothing."

I just so happened to see her cheering him on. Any ordinary person's vision is typically unable to see those lip movements, but she still wanted to chase after Yuuji and cheer him on silently. As I think about how Kirishima-san's warm and gentle feelings were resting upon Yuuji, I just can't help but feel jealous of him.

"Well, it doesn't matter. Someone has to die anyway."

"Aki, what kind of inauspicious thing are you saying? We'll definitely win if everyone works hard!"

"That's right, Akihisa-kun! We're going to end this battle in the best way possible!"

Minami and Himeji-san are looking at me adamantly. This really isn't what I'm talking about...but since they say so, I'll forget about my execution of Yuuji if we're going to settle this in the best way possible.

"Hey, they're not attacking!

"Those guys...! It's a bluff!"

We can hear such words as we run by the 3rd years; it seems they have understood our intentions. There's still some distance to the new school building, and it'll be all over if we're stopped here instead.

“We'll leave this to you guys!”

“““OK!”””

Yuuji shouted, and our 2nd year allies begin battle to support us . I guess Yuuji did brief them on what to do beforehand; they build walls around our path to allow us through, and our F class members, after seeing this, quickly got to action. Surely they must have sensed that this is the decisive moment.

But even so, the path is slowly getting blocked.

“Kudou! Muttsurini!”

“Alright!”

“...Understood.”

Upon hearing their names being called up, both of them shouted the keyword.

““Summon!””

Health Education, 2-A, Kudou Aiko, 498 points.

&

Health Education, 2-F, Tsuchiya Kouta, 671 points.

It seems Yuuji has already expected this to happen as he assigned the Health Education teacher here. The subject field we enter just so happens to be the Health Education Kudou-san and Muttsurini are best at.

“Let's go.”

“...Acceleration, begin.”

Kudou-san's summoned beast charges its axe with electricity before barging in, while Muttsurini's summoned beast accelerates itself before anyone can even blink, slashing down one enemy summoned beast after another.

“Speaking of which, those sure are monstrous numbers of points there.”

“I don't think even the teachers are a match for those two.”

Kudou-san continues to swing the electricity-charged axe, and Muttsurini's moving around, leaving afterimages in his wake. The weak enemies are dealt with easily, while the stronger ones are staggered by Muttsurini's blinding speed before being finished off by Kudou-san's follow-up. Both their summoned beasts definitely look like lightning there.

Thanks to those two, the path in front of us is opened up.

“Though I really want to leave everything to Kudou and Muttsurini—”

“It doesn't look like the enemy's going to be that naive.”

“This is just like the prediction.”

A certain person stands in front of those two with unmatched power.

She isn't dressed in anything dazzling, but even in uniform, there was something alluring coming from her.

One would be mesmerized simply by the charming presence surrounding her; Kogure-sempai has appeared.

“I guess I've got no choice then. Aiko and I will take her on.”

“Nope. I want him—Tsuchiya-kun to be my opponent.”

Kogure-sempai puts a finger on her chin and glances flirtatiously at Muttsurini. What could be seen from under the short skirt is causing our hearts to flutter.

However,

“We can't really accept that, Kogure-sempai. Muttsurini's compatibility with you is really bad.”

"Oh dear, I suppose that is supposed to be for him to decide, no ?"

Kogure-sempai folded her arms in front of her chest, "...I accept this challenge." Those large breasts are riding on her arms. Man...! That's despicable...!

Upon seeing this, Hideyoshi reaches his hand out to stop Muttsurini.

"That's enough, Muttsurini. You can't beat that upperclassman. "

But Muttsurini takes a step forward, seemingly wanting to shake Hideyoshi off.

"...This isn't a case of...winning or losing...!"

What's that idiot thinking? Everyone's thinking this now.

"Muttsurini, Kudou, we'll leave this to you."

But Yuuji doesn't seem to mind as he said this.

"Eh? But Muttsurini."

"We don't have time, and this subject field is Health Education. Muttsurini won't be able to contribute if he comes out from here."

That's true now that he says so; leaving aside Kudou-san, Muttsurini can't fight in any subject other than Health Education.

He also has to handle the other 3rd years chasing after us, and it isn't going to be wise asking him to retreat from here.

"Muttsurini! Stop staring at that upperclassman's body and focus on her summoned beast!"

"Aiko! Watch over Tsuchiya!"

Since we have no other choice, we can only make these last requests before leaving. Muttsurini gives us a thumbs up with his back facing us. That probably would have looked reliable if there wasn't a pool of nosebleed at his feet.

"Thank you very much, Tsuchiya-kun. I knew you would certainly not ignore me."

"You can't do that, Muttsurini-kun. Focus on her summoned beast instead of her. I can show you as much leg as you want later."

"You do not have to worry too much. Please continue to look at my legs if they fit your tastes."

"You mustn't listen to her, Muttsurini-kun! Once everything is over, I'll dress up in a swimsuit for you to see."

"...I have no interest in any of you...!"

“So you guys are next, sempais?”

“You actually came here, Yoshii, Sakamoto...!”

“I'm going to pay you back for everything up till now...!”

After getting past Kogure-sempai, the Toko-Natsu pair, whom we have quite the history with, stands in our way. We can't just leave these two to Kudou-san and Muttsurini, but we don't have time to waste...!

“Aki, leave these two to Kinoshita and me. You guys hurry on. You okay with this, Kinoshita?”

“Well, we don't have another choice.”

Like Kudou-san and Muttsurini before this, Minami and Hideyoshi step forward.

“Huh? What are you saying? We have a debt to settle with Yoshii and Sakamoto.”

“Na-Natsukawa, I'll be happy with Kinoshita as my opponent too.”

Tsunemura-sempai's words caused Hideyoshi's shoulders to shudder. Is it really alright to leave things to them?

“We don't have time. Let's leave it to those two and hurry on.”

Yuuji prompts us as he rushes forward. I have all kinds of worries here, but I don't have any choice in this situation.

“We'll leave it to you, Minami, Hideyoshi. Aim for their eyes if anything happens.”

“Right, got it!”

“That's not something we should be agreeing too, isn't it!?”

“You may pound my flesh and bones into bits, Kinoshita, but this isn't going to stop my love for you!”

“Ki-Kinoshita...I think I should go on with Aki..?”

“Shimada, I'll hate you for eternity if you leave me behind here.”

We continue on while leaving Minami and Hideyoshi behind. Though the staircase and main entrance of the new school building is tightly defended, it doesn't seem to be the case anywhere else.

“Well then, let's warm up a little before chasing after Yoshii and the rest, Tsunemura.”

“Well, that's true. It's better to settle any personal issues after the summoning war is over.”

“What're you saying now? We're the ones who want to quickly beat you and hurry to Aki and the rest.”

“Right, that's the spirit, Shimada. We must beat them and send them to the detention room as soon as possible.”

“Ah...you guys seem to be mistaken about something.”

“Mistaken? About what?”

“Well, you might have underestimated us because Tsunemura and I have been careless against Yoshii and Sakamoto.”

Mathematics, Natsukawa Shunpei, 3-A, 733 points

&

Mathematics, Tsunemura Yuusaku, 3-A, 751 points.

“—This can't be considered a battle with you guys as our opponents”

“Listen up, Akihisa, even if the enemy's defenses are weak, it doesn't mean that we have time. Once we reach there, we need to hurry up with our objective as soon as possible.”

“Got it.”

“Himeji, you'll be our guard. You'll be in the same field as us, but you'll be handling the enemies coming from the corridor. Please hold on until Akihisa completes his objective.”

“Understood.”

“They're coming! It's those second years!”

“There're 3 of them! Take them out!”

The 3rd years start to gather to prevent us from heading to the 4th level.

We pretend to run to the staircase, before changing directions suddenly towards our real objective, the principal's office.

“I'll call out my summoned beast here!”

Himeji-san stopped at the corridor in front of the principal's office, facing the stairs.

“I'll leave it to you, Himeji-san!”

“Akihisa-kun, please do your best!”

We left Himeji-san behind and continued forward, quickly heading to the room with the principal's office signboard to complete our objective.

"Right, let's begin!"

"OK, let's go."

Yuuji gets ready to begin the summon the moment I open the door, getting ready to enter. Eh? What do we do if it won't open? If that ends up happening, the lock might be destroyed *due to some unfortunate accident*. It's good that the door is unlocked, for everyone's sake.

"—Awaken."

I heard Yuuji say this keyword the instant I entered the room. This is the power of the platinum bracelet we got during the school festival, and because of this, ability, we can summon monsters even without any teacher around.

Once the bracelet's activated, Yuuji hurries into the principal's office. Alright.

"I just need to call out the summoned beast and wreck the principal's office..."

"Well, the problem is that it's not going to be that easy."

"Oh? That certainly is an unexpected reaction. I thought you would be a little more surprised."

Takashiro-sempai appears in front of us, looking rather relaxed as he smiles.

"If you don't mind, can you please tell me how did you find me here? Even though I had to reveal my location, you probably would not be able to track me if you aren't at the headquarters."

Takashiro-sempai asked Yuuji, looking rather interested. Yuuji merely snorted however, *don't ask such a stupid question*, seemingly saying this as he answered.

"I didn't have any proof about that. It's just a guess."

"A guess, huh?"

"Yeah. I do know that you're a smart guy. I also know how naive my strategy is."

Looking at what he did up till now, we can guess that Takashiro-sempai has managed to predict all the situations till now. Naturally, neither Yuuji nor Kirishima-san may be able to predict such situations, let alone me, but Takashiro-sempai was certainly able to do so.

"Therefore, if this is really the case, I just made my guess according to those facts. I don't know what your assumptions are, but I can be certain that my strategy was seen through."

One can say that was definitely Yuuji's way of assuming that our strategy was seen through right from the beginning. Because of that, the plan Yuuji thought of was simple.

"Oh great...after all that planning, you still left everything to me . That's certainly a lazy strategy."

"Shut up. This is a battle with a girl on the line, right? You better do this properly."

If Takashiro-sempai wasn't here, I'll be the one destroying the target (computer). This little ploy doesn't exist now.

"Since you thought of everything till you, you never assumed that I would gather lots of fighting strength, did you?"

"Not at all. There's not much space to allocate so many people, and it'll be difficult not to attract attention if you move so many people to such a seemingly meaningless place."

"Oh...?"

"And more importantly, you have a score to settle with Akihisa over Himeji. Isn't it right that as a man, you want a head-on duel?"

Once Yuuji said this, Takashiro-sempai looked really delighted as he answered.

"That certainly is the case. You really know a man's romance, Sakamoto-kun."

"...Thanks."

Yuuji looks rather depressed, probably because he was teased by everyone for being romantic to Kirishima-san just now.

"Now then, I can't waste that much time along with you guys. I'll leave it to you, Akihisa."

"Okay."

"I certainly will not do anything classless."

As Takashiro-sempai had said, it certainly will be hard to imagine him calling for reinforcements after this conversation, though it's not a bad thing to be careful now.

I stare at Takashiro-sempai, getting ready in front of the principal's desk, and call out my summoned beast.

"—Summon."

The summoned beast I'm very familiar with appears from the patterned array, and there's practically no difference from the first time it was summoned other than the clothing material. The weapon I've been using all this time has been the wooden sword, to a point where I find it weird to use anything else.

"Then, I too will sum—"

"Now, Akihisa!"

"Got it!"

I let my summoned beast run towards the principal's desk while Takashiro-sempai's about to call out his summoned beast. My aim isn't to beat this guy, so I have no reason to wait for him to call out his summoned beast. I'll destroy the desk along with the computer using this strength several times that of a human's, and if there's nothing, I'll just destroy the entire room!

Using the forward momentum, my summoned beast swings the wooden sword down—and at that moment.

"It's not always an advantage to be able to touch physical objects."

My summoned beast was knocked into the bookshelf on the desk.

"Wha—!?"

I couldn't believe my eyes. Thi-This upperclassman, did he...

"Did you just throw the summoned beast aside?"

"No no no. Only Nishimura-sensei is able to do such a thing. I merely added a little force and changed its direction."

Takashiro-sempai answered as he eased himself from a stance.

That movement just now was—

"Tch. You have fighting experience huh...looks like you're more than what your appearance seems."

"I didn't know why so many people hated me back then, and in middle school, I occasionally attended a dojo."

Takashiro-sempai merely answered Yuuji's words with a smile.

"...But it's merely to an amateurish level. I probably would not be able to pull this off if Yoshii Akihisa-kun had not been careless."

And then, he continued on, smiling at me this time.

I'll definitely be lying if I said that I was wary of him, but it's really unexpected to see him actually fight a summoned beast with his physical body...!

“But even so, after saying such words, you never waited for me to call out my summoned beast in the slightest...you really will do anything to win, though I had more or less expected it.”

He actually could counter this action, and it's really too much that he was able to read out actions like this. Guess I got no choice but to fight him head on!

“You understand, Akihisa?”

In response to Yuuji's voice, I nod silently.

Humanities, 3-A, Takashiro Masaharu, 375 points (Geography)

Vs

Humanities, 2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, 302 points (Japanese History)

I see that the indicated subject beside the score is humanities. To be honest, I'm really grateful for this.

"I heard that though you are of F class, your scores are beyond that level. Besides your best subjects, your scores are typically around 150 or so, right?"

"I can't consider myself a man if I let myself rot further after the insults you made."

I really have lots of issues against this upperclassman. It started when he interfered by giving advice during our battle against C class, and then he shamed my friend, interrupted our battle against A class, and most importantly—he tried to reach for Himeji-san. With so many reasons now, I have lots of motivation to fight him... and this time, I have Yuuji helping me.

"This really is bad, is it not? This is the one case I really wanted to avoid, seeing you get such a high score through your own ability, Yoshii-kun."

Takashiro-sempai grimaced.

What he said wasn't unreasonable. This battle is advantageous for us in that we can win in 2 ways—either to destroy the computer, our main aim, or to beat this upperclassman in front of us.

"In this situation, I might be able to beat you and win this summoning war for the 2nd years, Takashiro-sempai."

If it were any other subject, I could only aim to destroy the target, make use of the good position to drag it into the attack, and

destroy it. I now have another way to attack however, and looking at the current situation, I made the best possible move.

“I see. Deary me, I really am in a pinch.”

“I'll make that relaxed look on your face disappear.”

Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast is now facing off against mine.

I thought his summoned beast would be something like a knight from a story, but it unexpectedly turns out to be a samurai.

“This is going to be...a proper battle!”

“Though you did launch a surprise attack just now...”

I first let the summoned beast charge towards Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast, and not the desk to observe the situation. I pretend to swing the wooden sword down, but I'm really aiming at giving a sweeping kick. I'll see how he handles this attack, and then I'll see how good he is!

“Hm, that level of control is as the rumors say. The motions are really fluid.”

He parried my wooden sword with his own sword, and lifted his leg slightly to dodge my sweeping kick. If that wasn't enough, he tried to aim for my leg that had missed its attack.

“...!”

I tried to balance myself after missing my footing, and focused on trying to regain my balance. I guess I'm lucky that he didn't try to attack me, whether it was because he was relaxed, or because he was testing me.

"Wait...hold on a moment...that level of control is the same as Akihisa...!?"

Yuuji could only exclaim in shock upon seeing this battle.

Humph Takashiro-sempai chuckled as he scratched his head, saying,

"You really do not know anything, huh?"

"Wh-What do you mean?"

"Do I have to tell you how many menial tasks I was bluffed into doing before the 'Punishment Inspector' was introduced?"

""..."

No, erm...we're in the middle of an important battle here. If you're trying to act cool...

"Akihisa...there's no one else more suited to be your opponent."

"Stop it! Don't put me on the same level as him!"

"Hm...I suppose I was insulted in some way there."

I do have mixed feelings having such an opponent getting everything before I did.

“It looks like there are quite some misunderstandings between us. How about we talk a little to understand each other better?”

“Too bad, we don't have the time—!”

“Haha, you certainly look busy there.”

I don't know what he's aiming at delaying things like this, but there's no benefit for me. I won't gain anything from chit-chatting with him, and it's most important to decide this battle on the summoned beasts.

I continue to launch one attack after another, using the power from my high score and all the moves I practiced. However, Takashiro-sempai was always able to dodge using tiny movements and parry my attacks through attacks of similar power.

“You're rather good to be able to match Akihisa when he has those points. You're not normal after all.”

“It is a pleasure to be praised by you, Sakamoto Yuuji-kun.”

My battle with Takashiro-sempai continued while they're talking. It looks like he's only focused on defending, and isn't doing anything to attack.

“What are you waiting for, Takashiro-sempai?”

"Nothing specifically."

We don't have much time in the first place, since the other 3rd years will know that we're here. Himeji-san can't possibly hold them off for too long.

But it'll be foolish if I too mess up here. Takashiro-sempai may be aiming for this, and I have to be careful no matter what; I have to attack actively using my advantage.

"Since you're going to focus on defending, I'm going to do something else"

I do have a time limit, but there are two ways to win. If I beat Takashiro-sempai, let's change to Plan B!

First, I aim at Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast like before, and swing my wooden sword down. Once I find that he's preparing to dodge, I'll let my summoned beast jump behind a certain desk. If he decides to defend against me, he won't be able to stop me.

I'll jump onto the computer on the desk Right after I thought of this.

I felt my arm being grabbed weakly. Ah...this is bad—!

My summoned beast got thrown out again, and Takashiro-sempai was standing leisurely by the side again. Ugh...! I forgot about that...!

“Leaving aside the fact that it is a battle between summoned beasts, I do not think it is despicable for me to personally interfere when you are trying to destroy property, no?”

As he said, it isn't despicable since I did attempt to do what he said. Also, there's no rule in the summoning war saying that ' humans can't do anything to summoned beasts personally'.

“This really is getting a little tough...”

Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast is strong, and he can personally block me from destroying the computer. It's also against the rules for me to attack Takashiro-sempai directly, so that of course is a no-go.

The controller itself is experienced in combat, and Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast is so strong. He must be really used to handling one on one battles.

In that case, the best option for me to take in this situation—

“Yoshii Akihisa-kun, how about we have a wager?'

“—Eh? A wager?”

This upperclassman just said something strange in this situation while I'm disadvantaged. How am I supposed to be free enough to bet on something in this battle?

"Yes, a bet. Let us have a woman on the line in this battle, without anyone else interfering. Do you not feel, after making it all the way here, that it is noble to fight over her?"

Takashiro-sempai never specifically mention who she is, but it's definitely Himeji-san. He intends to use her as part of our bet.

"...I don't want to bet on this while ignoring her wishes."

Even if I do agree to this, it's meaningless if Himeji-san herself does not. Doesn't Takashiro-sempai understand this at all?

After hearing my solemn reply, Takashiro-sempai merely shook his head and answered,

"No no, the winner will not necessarily win her; this is not the basis of this bet. That is something she would have to agree with in the first place."

"Then, what's the bet?"

"Between you and me, Yoshii Akihisa-kun, the loser will be unable to approach her. This is all."

I see. It's true that her opinion doesn't matter here. Takashiro-sempai and I are the only ones who need to accept this.

"It is against my principles to use one's affections for another as a bet...but this is for the sake of Miss Himeji Mizuki's future. It will be really great if you can accept it."

For Himeji-san's 'future' this sounds really annoying to me, and I can't help but emphasize my tone.

"...What are you trying to say?"

If it's that me being near Himeji-san will bring her unhappiness, if that's what he's saying, I can't pretend to ignore it.

"Akihisa, don't listen to any taunts the enemy makes."

Yuuji advised me, probably worried that Takashiro-sempai might have some intentions. He's simply worrying too much though. This upperclassman is the reason for Himeji-san's unhappiness.

"It's fine Yuuji. Let him say whatever he wants. He needs to know what reality is."

And also, maybe I might be able to understand what Himeji-san has been troubled about recently.

Upon hearing me say this, "Thank goodness", Takashiro-sempai nodded in satisfaction. His reactions really annoy me.

"Well then, since it will be crude to simply talk about this nicely , I shall get straight to the point."

*Ahem*he coughed pretentiously, and continued,

"Yoshii Akihisa-kun, your existence and future will hinder the future potentials Miss Himeji Mizuki might possess."

My value of worth was completely ignored by him, and I become more forceful in my tone,

"...What do you mean by that?"

"Do you understand Miss Himeji Mizuki's personality?"

"I guess. A little better than you, that is, sempai."

I smile leisurely, filled with hostility within.

"Then, do you know of her going overseas in an exchange program with our sister school?"

Takashiro-sempai said.

"...Eh...?"

For an instant, I could not understand what Takashiro-sempai meant when he said that, and I accidentally blurted out.

It seems Takashiro-sempai wants me to hear this again as he repeated his words another time.

"I am asking if you heard that Miss Himeji Mizuki is going overseas for an exchange program with another school?"

Exchange program...?

I couldn't hide my shock at these words.

But after hearing them, I started to think about lots of things.

Himeji-san has been looking weird whenever she was called to the principal's office.

Linne-kun isn't just some 'foreign student', but a 'foreign exchange student'.

Himeji-san and Takashiro-sempai did have some deep talk between them.

He started to explain everything.

“The treatment over there is just like A class, and living overseas is also an important experience as part of one's growth. You do think that this is also a good thing for her, no?”

I can't deny that at all. I don't know what Himeji-san herself thinks, but normally, she'll get a better studying environment if she goes overseas.

Because of this, I can understand what Takashiro-sempai meant when he talks about 'Himeji-san's potentials'.

But—

“Why're you saying that I'm stopping Himeji-san?”

I don't know what he meant when he said my existence will only hinder her. I don't understand this at all. It's true that I'll be sad if Himeji-san leaves, but I won't stop her. I didn't know about this at all, and even if I want to stop her, I can't.

While I'm feeling skeptical, my opponent lets out a sigh.

"I do not wish to mention this to you, but it will be great if you can understand..."

"Sorry, I'm not a smart guy in any way."

Guess I've got no choice, Takashiro-sempai gave such an expression once he heard my reply, and started talking as if he's lecturing me.

"I heard that you've been fighting summoning wars so that Miss Himeji can get A class treatment."

"..."

I didn't answer.

The opponent continues on selfishly as if his words were confirmed.

"This is a fact even I, as a 3rd year, can find out simply through some investigations. Miss Himeji Mizuki also does know your motives for participating in the summoning wars, right?"

I still didn't answer.

"Then, think about Miss Himeji Mizuki's position given her personality. You should be able to know the answer then, right?"

Himeji-san's position.

In terms of ability, she's at class A's level, and while us class F was fighting class A, she got news about going overseas to study—

"Even if there was a superior proposal, how would anyone think if he knows of someone fighting for his sake? As you know, Yoshii Akihisa-kun, Miss Himeji Mizuki is very kind, and certainly she would only have one thought."

Don't let everything go to waste...there's no doubt Himeji-san will have such thoughts, even if she has to bury her own future.

In other words, my efforts to get class A's facilities for Himeji-san will be—

"That is why she cannot talk about going overseas to study. Your wishes to beat class A is the reason why she would abandon her own future and stay in this school, no? Your efforts and kind intentions were the cause of it."

I suddenly recalled that when we were fighting against Kirishima-san and class A, Takashiro-sempai asked me something strange.

"Yoshii Akihisa-kun. When a person with ability, but is unfairly treated, tries to get back the position he deserves, will you step in to interfere?"

Now I finally understand the meaning behind that question.

I thought Takashiro-sempai was the one stopping her...but that's wrong. The one stopping her is—!

"It seems you have understood."

Sempai showed a depressed look, seemingly trying to console me.

I didn't say anything as I continue to listen to him.

"And then, once you know this truth, she will be be troubled all the more and say some kind lies to rationalize your actions? At that moment, I hope that you will make the correct response."

It seemed he was done with whatever he wanted to say as he continues to look at me without saying anything.

I see. It's because of that reason that he made just a bet...I understand.

Anyway, what I have to do now is—

"...Akihisa, go retreat to Shimada's group for now. We'll get our field into theirs and start an 'interference'."

Yuuji's voice echoes in the room, probably trying to snap me out of my thoughts.

"Eh, what're you saying, Yuuji? How can we run away without doing anything?"

"Just give up. This upperclassman's a lot more prepared than you imagined. You can't possibly complete the objective in such a situation."

Prepared? I don't understand what Yuuji's saying here. There aren't any ambush forces here, just a simple battle of points, and we do have a good chance of winning here. No, I would say that there's still a second option, so I have some advantage against this upperclassman in a one-on-one battle.

Takashiro-sempai asks, seemingly expressing my thoughts.

"Oh, Sakamoto Yuuji-kun, I do think it's disadvantageous to retreat in such a situation. Do you really think this is a good option ?"

"Yeah, we're retreating. Though you're easy to bluff, it doesn't mean that you're bad at bluffing others, right?"

"...What do you mean by that?"

"Your expression sure changed there. Are you really bothered that we're running away?"

Both of them continued to talk.

"Yes, of course I would. Yoshii Akihisa-kun is strong in battle, and so is Miss Himeji Mizuki. It would be fine if you had understood what I was getting at just now, but I cannot allow you to escape."

"Ha, such ridiculous words you say. What I think is that you just don't want Himeji and Akihisa to have a chat over this by settling this as quickly as possible."

Yuuji gave a taunting look.

"I truly believe this is an incorrect decision—but even if I do say so, you would not listen to my words, I suppose."

Takashiro-sempai said, and sighed.

"Then, I shall add on to the bet."

He takes out a familiar looking letter from his uniform pocket.

...That's the thing Linne-kun tried to pass to me—

"A few days ago, I received this letter from Mr Linne Klein. I assumed he would write something related to this summoning war, information that was overly unnecessary to you..."

"This summoning war? What do you mean? What happened?"

"There is no need for you to know. I think you should have it though, Yoshii Akihisa-kun."

His stare at me has some deep meaning behind it. I should have this? What does he mean?

"As it is written here, it is a diary of a certain female, translated into Japanese. It was originally written in a foreign language, and it seemed Mr Linne Klein wanted to hand it to you after he translated it."

Suddenly, I remembered a foreign notebook I gave to Linne-kun before the start of our summoning war against class A. Was that a diary?

"I do apologize, but I did some form of investigation to check if he had written any unnecessary information. Of course, the truth was that I was being too paranoid."

Takashiro-sempai calmly said.

He read the diary? Whose? What's written on it? Is it alright if others know about this?

"This diary contains undiluted love expressed to a certain boy, how she liked 'him', and what sort of hero 'he' is to her."

This was a diary dropped in class F.

A diary belonging to a girl.

Written in a foreign language.

This is written...with a feeling of not wanting others to know about it.

"I do believe the name of the diary's owner is—Miss Shimada Minami."

At that instant, I heard something snap within me.

"Stop it, Akihisa! That's Takashiro's taunt!"

Yuuji binds me back by locking me in a Nelson's hold, and I try my best to break free from it as I growled at that guy,

"HAND IT OVER TO ME, YOU SCUMBAG!"

"I do find it surprising to be called a scumbag. I did not read it to peek on her feelings."

"What are you surprised about when you yapped about wanting to use it as a bet!"

"I am doing all of these for Miss Himeji Mizuki's future. I will gladly accept the task even if these acts are seen as twisted and diabolic. This is no different from what you have been doing till now, and you have no right to despise me now, do you?"

"SHUT UP! DON'T SAY SUCH ANNOYING NONSENSE!"

I couldn't move, but my summoned beast could.

I let my summoned beast, which has been on standby till now, attack Takashiro-sempai directly.

“You idiot! That large movement will only get beaten through!”

At the same time Yuuji lashed out, Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast stabs at mine from the side.

“...Tch! Don't—get in my way!”

I block that sword with my wooden sword, and then hit out at the interfering summoned beast.

The enemy dodges the attack by twisting its body slightly, and ducked down to send a sweeping kick to me.

“You're a nuisance!”

I stamp at the incoming sweeping kick to deal with the enemy's attack, and the enemy frantically kneels down to try and dodge my attack.

“You are able to perform like this even in such a situation...you certainly are not an enemy I can let my guard down against, Yoshii Akihisa-kun.”

“Shut up! I'll smash you to bits!”

"Huh, I guess it is to be expected that you are being so angry after all. You know that your efforts to help Miss Himeji Mizuki are only hindering her, and I pointed out the hypocrisy in your actions. You have no way to argue back even after being told off, and your embarrassment over your failure led to your anger."

"Shut up shut up SHUT UP!"

If not for this guy, Himeji-san will definitely tell me everything.

If not for this guy, Minami's diary won't be seen!

If not for this guy—!

"Do you truly understand? I merely explained all the facts to you. No matter whether I am around, Miss Himeji Mizuki will still be in a dilemma between your actions and going overseas, and Miss Shimada Minami will never be able to hide her secret because you read it, right?"

The enemy didn't attack furiously, instead dodging at me all the time. I really want to make that bastard shut up, but there's still no development in the battle.

"That's enough—I heard enough of those disgusting words."

But I have an ability that can overcome the current situation.

"Double!"

I call out the keyword.

This keyword allows me to call out another summoned beast.

Another magic array appears beside my feet, and there appears another familiar of mine.

I let the main beast attack the right arm of the enemy, and the sub beast attack the left arm, using the wooden sword to block the sides.

“So now it has arrived, this power that is said to be able to overpower Nishimura-sensei...!”

Takashiro-sempai's expression changed.

The enemy twists its body to dodge the wooden sword attacking the head, and barely managed to dodge the other attack using a sword. He's not used to fighting against many people after all, just as I expected! Him trying to stop me is suicidal!

I let my main summoned beast attack the enemy, and the instant he stops, I'll let the sub beast swing—

At that moment,

“!? Wh...y...!?”

My two summoned beast can't move.

“Chance for me, I guess.”

The enemy didn't allow this opportunity to get away as it broke free from the tussle and gets into attack position. Tch...! It's fine! I'm able to take it given my points!

Once I realize that my summoned beast's unable to move for some reason, I try my best to think of how to fight back.

On the other hand, the enemy turns the blade back and attacks the wooden sword from below, attacking the arms of the summoned beast that is unable to move. A reverse blade? Is he going easy on me?

“Are you...making fun of me...!?”

And then, I feel a sharp pain in my left arm. Naturally, I want to use my right hand to hold it.

“It will be the other side this time around.”

I feel an equal amount of pain on the right side this time.

“Ah...a...”

The sharp pain caused my arms to go numb and slump weakly.

“And then, over here.”

I can't resist as I can only watch the enemy send a kick at the abdomen.

An unspeakable amount of pain overcomes my entire body.

“—aaa!? Ugh...ahh...!”

My arms are numb, and I can't hold onto my hurting areas, so I ended up kneeling on the floor. It hurts! ...I can't take it...I'm... suffocating...!

“Akihisa!”

“You do not have to worry. It is simply a feedback of the pain, and there will not be any wounds. Even so, I did hit the areas where the pain would focus, so the feedback this time will be 100 times that of the usual.”

I feel a pain stronger than the pain in my arms overcoming my body, rendering me unconscious

I'm rolling on the floor in pain, unable to even kneel.

“..You bastard, you actually did such a despicable thing...!”

“Yoshii Akihisa-kun is an opponent that cannot be dealt with using ordinary methods. Please allow me to capitalize on the weaknesses of the 'Punishment Inspector'.”

I groan. The sharp pain is causing a shock in my heart, and no matter how I try to open my mouth, I can't breath. My numb arms mean that I can't put my hands on my belly to adjust my breathing . It hurts...! It really hurts...! It's unbearable...!

“And now for the final blow.”

"Wait, Takashiro."

"Is there something, Sakamoto Yuuji-kun?"

"...We lose. I surrender. Don't let Akihisa suffer like this."

"Ah, thank goodness. I do not wish for others to suffer in futility, so—"

"Ar—gh...! Move...!"

"Akihisa!?"

"It looks like he still does not wish to give up, but that is all."

I could control my summoned beast without any issues up till now, and now I cannot give any instructions at all. Damn it..why can't I move...!?

"That truly is an amazing amount of will you have. A hit in the solar plexus would bring about a diabolic amount of pain."

I still can't breath, and I can't even feel all my pain fully, let alone recover.

In my mind, now devoid of oxygen, the only thing running within is the aim to beat this opponent in front of me.

"But I am not a merciless person, so I shall not cause him further pain in this situation. Besides, Yoshii Akihisa-kun is unable to do anything now."

“What's going on? Why do you say he can't do anything?”

“Pardon me for not stating things clearly. I do not mean Yoshii Akihisa-kun himself, but that his summoned beasts cannot do anything.”

My summoned beasts can't move no matter how much I try. Why...! Is it because I can't focus in my pain...!?

“The 'Punishment Inspector' is a unique summoned beast, but you often focus on your advantages and underestimate others. It is the same for the platinum bracelets.”

“Ah...! Did...!”

“I heard there is a defect in this bracelet. For example, it will short-circuit when used by those with high scores.”

Takashiro-sempai's words enter my mind in the midst of my pain and agony.

How Yuuji and I got the platinum bracelets. Right, it's because there's a defect in them that the principal gave it to us.

“Yoshii Akihisa-kun's strength is a threat, and even with such a score he had, the flaw in the bracelet could not be activated. I might not be able to win if he uses the two summoned beasts then.”

“So you've been taunting Akihisa before the war even started...! That's just to get him to activate the flaw in the bracelet?”

"That is how it is. Yoshii Akihisa-kun's competitiveness really helped me out here."

In other words, I've been toyed by him right from the get-go? Is that it...?

"The efforts you put in to win ended up being the cause of your downfall, and your efforts for Miss Himeji Mizuki caused her anguish—I can understand your pain here, Yoshii Akihisa-kun."

Upon hearing Takashiro-sempai's pity, I end up in a great amount of despair as I kneel on the floor in pain and agony.

It's fine if everything I did till now is futile. It's not something to be happy about, but it's not a rare thing for an idiot like me to work hard and get nothing in the end.

But it's different this time.

My efforts for us ended up causing trouble for my important friend—and the person I like. This isn't a case of futility, but unnecessary efforts.

What did Himeji-san think when she heard me say that 'we're going to beat class A'? Did she find it stupid when there was a better choice for her, or did she feel sad for me?

—No, it'll be great if she really thinks that way. That's some sort of salvation for me.

Himeji-san isn't someone who'll think like that however.

Himeji-san's heart has been aching whenever she looks at me. Because of that, she must have been depressed.

“...Am I...in the way...”

I inadvertently utter these words.

“It is truly a pity, Yoshii Akihisa-kun. There is only one thing you can do, and that is to back out obediently and not say anything ridiculous. This is the best choice both for you and for her.”

As Takashiro-sempai has said, even if I say to Himeji-san that ' I'm beating class A for my own sake', she won't believe it. Instead of being presumptuous in getting class A's facilities, letting her stay in class F without any illness...

Right when I can't tell whether the continuous amount of pain was coming from within me.

The principal's office door opens with a creak.

“Eh...? Takashiro-sempai? Why...?”

A familiar girl appears there.

“Himeji-san...?”

She probably came to check on us because the summoning system isn't destroyed yet, right? Anyway, she so happened to be here, right at this moment.

“Akihisa-kun, what did you say to Takashiro-sempai...”

It was a voice I could recognize straight away.

There's no need to explain, for the atmosphere surrounding us explained everything clearly.

“Akihisa!”

At the moment Yuuji called out to me, I felt a feedback in my body. My summoned beasts were probably kicked away by Yuuji.

“...Sakamoto Yuuji-kun. This act seems to be against the rules.”

“Sorry, I slipped trying to get close in my panic.”

I look on, and find that the enemy's summoned beast stabbed through where my summoned beast was at. He probably did that to prevent my summoned beast from being attacked, I guess?

“Do you wish for a rematch, Yoshii Akihisa-kun? Since Miss Himeji Mizuki has arrived, I suppose my allies will come soon.”

Takashiro-sempai points at my summoned beast, which is already unable to move.

No, it's the same whether I fight back on now. Right now, I'm...

“Please wait, Takashiro-sempai. I wish to say some things to Akihisa-kun just for a while.”

"Normally, I would listen to your requests no matter what, Miss Himeji Mizuki...but a duel is a duel."

Unlike before, Takashiro-sempai has become really competitive as he rejected Himeji-san's request.

But to be honest, I'm really grateful that he's showing such an attitude right now. Even if I do talk to Himeji-san, I don't know how to handle what's next.

"I shall formally apologize for my refusal when we are alone together."

Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast attacks mine.

"Summon."

At this moment, Himeji-san's summoned beast appears and rushes in, looking like it wishes to let my summoned beast escape.

"Eh, Himeji-san...!?"

"2-F's Himeji Mizuki proposes a challenge against Takashiro-sempai in place of Yoshii Akihisa-kun."

Humanities, 3-A, Takashiro Masaharu, 375 points (Geography)

Vs

Humanities, 2-F, Himeji Mizuki, 87 points (Japanese History)

Himeji-san's summoned beast readies its weapon, and the score's shown.

“Miss Himeji Mizuki, I do have to praise you for not giving up on your classmates, but you may be overestimating yourself a little too much fighting me with such scores.”

He probably expected that Himeji-san used up quite some points before getting here, as he doesn't look wary at all even after seeing her summoned beast.

“I know that I alone can't beat you, Takashiro-sempai.”

My summoned beast can't move because of the defect in the bracelet, and Himeji-san's summoned beast has used up a lot of points. In contrast, we're facing an enemy with high scores and top-notch skills.

This situation is despairing.

“...Yuuji, if you don't want to give up on this summoning war, cancel this field and run out with Himeji-san.”

I say to Yuuji. He's probably thinking about how to overturn this situation, right?

“...What about you?”

Yuuji asks calmly.

I stare at the summoning field in silence.

Himeji-san's summoned beast has been hacking hard at Takashiro-sempai, but it's only a matter of time before she's beaten .

It's impossible for everyone to escape in this situation, and I can't help out.

“I want to think about some things, in the detention room...”

I'll just stay here and let Yuuji and Himeji-san retreat. According to the rules of the summoning war, if the participant ends the battle on his own will, that person will be disqualified for running away from the enemy in battle. In that case, I should stay here since I can't fight, and let them escape.

Right when I want to say this to Yuuji, Himeji-san says to Yuuji,

“Sakamoto-kun, please bring Akihisa-kun back to Shouko-chan and the rest. You should be able to understand who's more likely to survive, me with the higher scores, or Akihisa-kun.”

Himeji-san stares at Yuuji seriously.

After hearing Himeji-san's words, Yuuji decided.

“Sorry Himeji.”

He grabs me by the chest and forces me to stand up with all his strength when I'm unable to even move, dragging me to the window. Is this guy seriously going to leave Himeji-san behind here...?

"Wait Yuuji, it's meaningless for me to survive now. You better escape with Himeji-san."

"Shut up, enough with the grumbles."

Yuuji completely ignores me as he drags me along, planning to escape.

But I just wish to say something.

"But Yuuji...even if we can escape, I can't possibly do my best to survive..."

What'll happen if I continue to work hard? The more I work hard, wouldn't Himeji-san feel more troubled and give up on the better future she has?

Suddenly, I recall two scenes in my mind.

One of it was the scene I saw after school when we were in elementary school.

A girl was writing silently on the blackboard under the glow of the sunset.

The other was during my elementary school days, at a certain hospital.

A girl sobbing as she studied in the quiet ward room.

This girl truly touched me for being so gentle, so hardworking. I definitely have to see that she gets what she deserves.

She's currently growing, trying her best to be recognized, her large winds about to meet the winds. There's nothing I can do now that I know that my actions will hinder her.

“Miss Himeji Mizuki, I do wish that Yoshii Akihisa-kun will stay right now. Please do not make me take you down.”

Himeji-san ignores Takashiro-sempai, who said such things, and she looks to be complaining about something as she looks at me, saying,

“I'm sorry for not saying this to you, Akihisa-kun. I know I shouldn't hide this from you, but I was wondering whether I should tell you this.”

“That is enough, Miss Himeji Mizuki. I hope you understand this is for your own good.”

Takashiro-sempai doesn't weaken his summoned beast's attacks .

Himeji-san continues to deal with the attacks as her points gets depleted as she says to me,

“Because if I told you that, you'll definitely tell me 'you should go', or something like that. I understand you'll say that for my sake , but I don't wish to hear you say anything like a farewell to me, Akihisa-kun.”

While Himeji-san's talking to me, Yuuji lifts me up onto the windowsill.

As she watches me, she says to me, crying yet smiling,

“Because—I like you, Akihisa-kun!”

The moment I heard these words, Yuuji's hands threw me out of the window.

And then, I was practically dragged away by Yuuji.

“Run, Akihisa! Himeji's efforts will be for naught if Takashiro catches up to us.”

For naught, my body naturally moved once I heard those words.

I'm thinking of not troubling Himeji-san again.

While I continue to run, my legs felt like they belong to someone else, and in my groggy mind, I think about what Himeji-san just said.

“Because—I like you, Akihisa-kun!”

Himeji-san said that she likes me, and because of that, she never talked about going overseas.

Her guess was correct. If I know that she's going overseas, where the conditions are better, I'll be hurt, but I'll definitely advise her to go. As for why, it's because it'll be simply stubborn for me to make her stay here.

She likes me, and doesn't want me to say any farewell to her, so she never said so. That's really a reasonable answer.

But Himeji-san said that she really likes me.

In the battle before this, Takashiro-sempai said,

"And then, once you know this truth, she will be be troubled all the more and say some kind lies to rationalize your actions?"

I'm shocked to know that my actions will hinder Himeji-san's future. Maybe she said she liked me to console me and tell me that my actions aren't hindering her.

Himeji-san said that her first love has yet to end, so I know I'm not the one she liked since elementary school...

"...Is it just as Takashiro-sempai said..."

I don't know where I escaped from since I was thinking. I continued to follow Yuuji as he continued to run to escape from the enemies, and recall the first time I met Himeji-san.

The Thirteenth Question

Please translate the following English word:

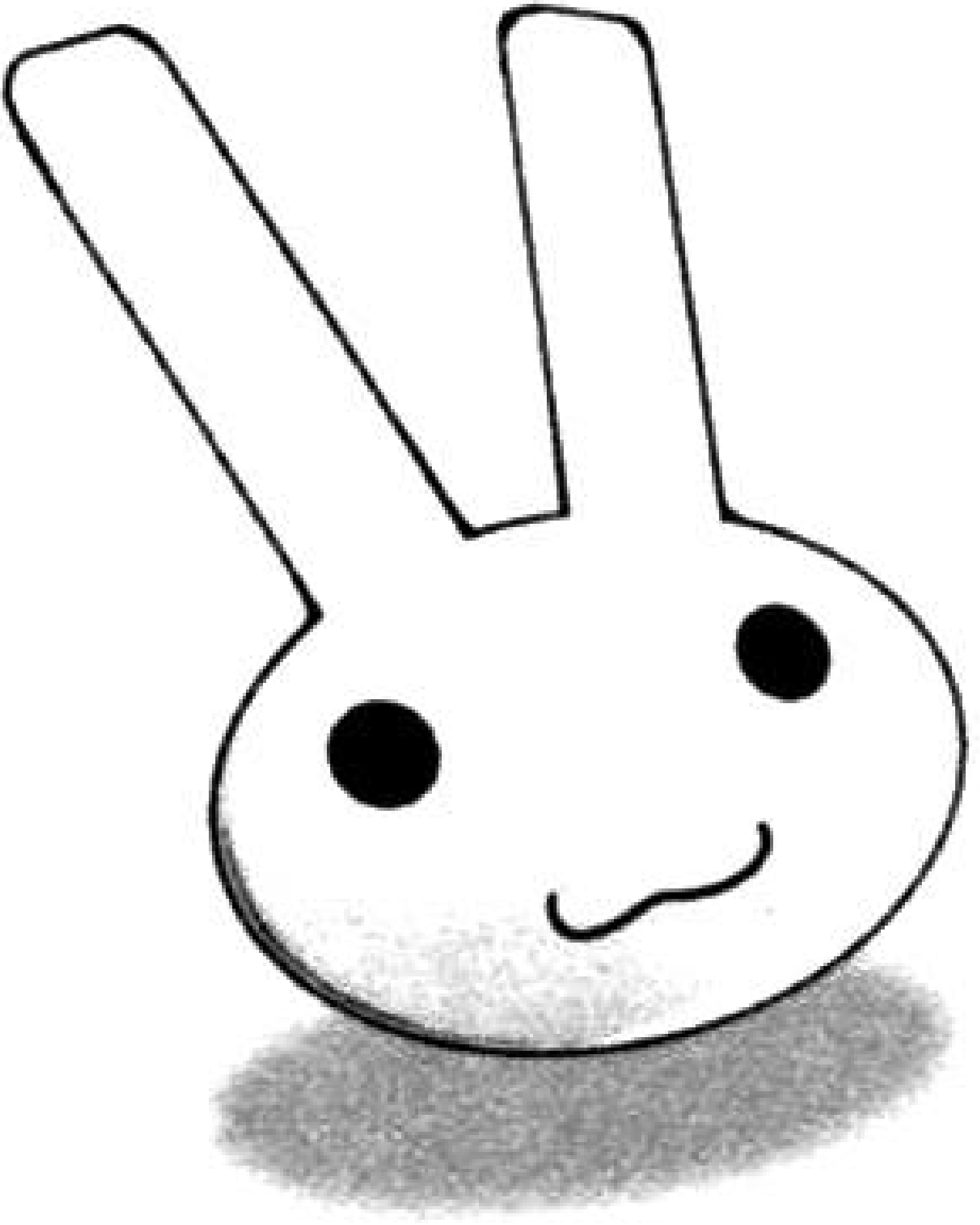
"Recollection"

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

Erinnerung

Teacher's comment:

Correct.



I do dream of it even now.

What I saw during my elementary school days, in the school after class had ended.

As the sunset shone into the classroom, that girl continued to face the blackboard alone, writing something silently.

It didn't look like she was punished, nor did it look like she was on cleaning duty, and I couldn't tell at first glance what she was doing.

She wrote it, erased it, erased again and wrote.

That time, the serious look she showed as she continued on — her figure left a deep impression in my heart for some strange reasons.

The Fourteenth Question

Please translate the following English line:

“This is the bookshelf that my grandmother had used regularly ”

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

“こ”[4]

Teacher's Comment:

Correct.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:

“こ[5] ”

Teacher's Comment:

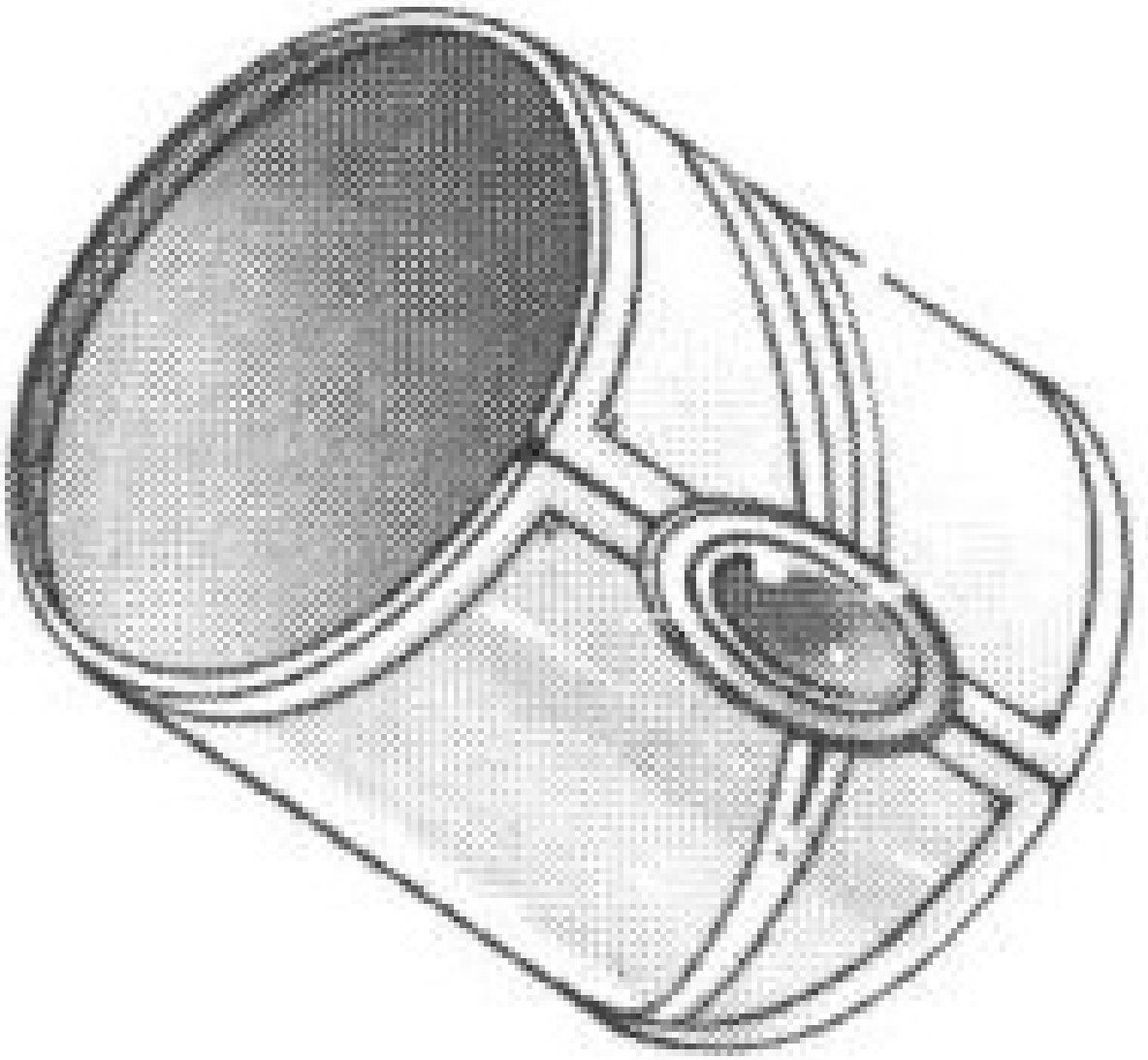
Are you still only able to translate 'this' at this point?

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

“ ”

Teacher's Comment:

Can you at least write something?



"Hey, Akihisa, call out your summoned beast and help them out."

As we pass through the new school building to the second years ' main camp, Yuuji, who had remained silent till now, suddenly said this to me,

Mathematics, Natsukawa Shunpei, 3-A, 688 points

&

Mathematics, Tsunemura Yuusaku, 3-A, 717 points.

Vs

Mathematics, Shimada Minami, 2-F, 41 points

&

Mathematics, Kinoshita Hideyoshi, 2-F, 26 points.

I see the scores from slightly far away.

It seems Minami and Hideyoshi are fighting the Toko-Natsu pair.

"I-I never thought that they would be weak, but I never expected them to be this strong."

“To think that Aki and Sakamoto actually could take them on...”

“We're really being underestimated here. Don't see us like this, we're still 3-A class caliber, you know?”

“We might even say that it's impressive you managed to last this long.”

It looks like Yuuji wants me to take over Minami and Hideyoshi, almost defeated at this point, to take on the Toko-Natsu pair as their opponent. If I think about it, my summoned beast wasn't worn out at all. I won't have any issues swapping with Minami's group.

“I understand—but if I'm swapped in, I hope that you guys will retreat. I probably would get defeated immediately...”

The problem is that I don't have any strength to focus on the summoning war.

“That's what I intended in the first place. I never expected much from you, so I don't care at all even if you're defeated here and sent to the detention room.”

Yuuji gave me a cold, condescending look as he said this.

“But don't you have something you have to say to Shimada?”

The moment he said that, I recalled Takashiro-sempai reading Minami's diary to me.

“Th-that's...”

I started to hate myself further.

I kept thinking about how I made Himeji-san suffer, but I forgot all about Minami. This is really something very important to her, and I'm like this despite being the cause of it all...how rotten am I going to be as a human being?”

“Let me say this first, once I make Shimada retreat, I'll send her to take part in the replenishment tests immediately, and I don't intend to allow you to retreat once there are still points left. If you have something to say to her, live on before the tests are over.”

Yuuji's saying that he won't waste time and fighting strength because of my personal blunder. Of course. This is a mistake I made in the first place.

“Go over if you understand. You won't be able to talk to her if she's sent to the detention room either way.”

Even if we lose together, it's forbidden for us to talk in the detention room. I won't be able to apologize to Minami then.

In that case, what I can do now is—

“Summon!”

I enter the field and call out my summoned beast, and once they heard me, the 4 of them, fighting against each other, look over at me.

“”Yoshii?””

The Toko-Natsu pair let their summoned beasts jump to the back and pull their distance from me. Looks like they're keeping their guard on me.

“Aki!”

“Akihisa!”

Minami and Hideyoshi run over to me.

Minami's closing in on me, and I hurriedly finish what I want to say because I didn't dare look at her in the face directly.

“I'll take over this battle, you two. Retreat now, Yuuji will instruct you further.”

“Hm...looks like the operation ended. Don't mind, Akihisa.”

Hideyoshi saw that Yuuji and I are here, and once he concluded this, encouraged us.

“...”

On the other hand, Minami's looking at my face, looking intrigued.

“Did something happen, Aki?”

Minami's worried tone caused me to feel more guilty.

She's being so kind to me now, and I handed her diary over to Linne-kun and Takashiro-sempai to read, and I couldn't get the letter back because we ran away.

“...Sorry Minami. I wanted to formally apologize, but we don't have time now.”

“Eh?”

Minami looks rather surprised once she hears me apologize.

I actually wanted to kneel down in front of her, but I can't do that. If I'm beaten here, I won't be able to allow Minami and Hideyoshi to escape, and I can't apologize to her properly after this .

“Let's go, Hideyoshi, Shimada. Leave this to Akihisa.”

Due to the failure of this operation, the F class members on their way start to retreat, and I as the rearguard have to retreat while stopping their attacks.

“Yuuji, you can't just leave Akihisa alone like this!”

“That's right, Sakamoto! At least let me stay behind”

“No need for that. I'll send in other reinforcements later—letting him think with that stupid brain of his right now is only going to hinder him. It's better to let him fight without thinking of anything.”

“...Did something happen, Sakamoto?”

“...”

Minami and Hideyoshi look in my direction worriedly, and after Yuuji said something, they retreated slightly. I hope my actions now will be able to help everyone unlike what happened before.

“Hey Yoshii, you're looking rather troubled to me.”

“Did something bad happen there? If you say it now, at least we'll pity you somewhat.”

The Toko-Natsu pair grinned as they looked at my face.

“...”

And I merely answer that taunt with silence.

“Tch, what's with that reaction? It's boring.”

“Don't say that. This guy just got beaten badly by Takashiro.”

“Ah, yeah, I remember there was such a report just now.”

While Yuuji and I were running around, escaping, the report of the failed attack on the principal's office was probably heard amongst the 3rd years.

“The girl you like, Himeji, I think? I heard that she was beaten and sent to the detention room, right?”

And also, the fact that the actual salutatorian, Himeji-san was beaten.

“You guys are really too much there. I heard that you left that girl there just to save yourselves? That's not something a man would do.”

“I always thought you were trash, but it really shocked me how rotten you are.”

These two, who I have quite the history with, are sneering away as if they took the head of the demon.

But right now, it's more relaxing for me that I'm being mocked like this...besides, what they said is the truth.

“Hey Yoshii, what do you think? You used a woman as a shield, managed to live longer, and now you're—”

And I overpower their words as I lower my head, saying,

“Sorry, but I have a request, *Natsukawa-sempai, Tsunemura-sempai*.”

“”.....Huh!?””

Both of them widened their eyes, probably feeling that my actions are really weird.

“Wait wait wait, you're actually calling us by our names correctly. Did something hit your head or something?”

“And you're calling us sempais. Now I'm feeling a chill.”

I ignore their disgusted reactions as I keep my head lowered, and continue,

“I'll be honest. I can't beat you in a 2 on 1 situation, sempais.”

“Huh? What's that about?”

“What kind of fact are you saying right now?”

It really is a fact. With those two upperclassmen as my opponent, someone like me can't possibly beat them.

“—so I say, can I have a 1 on 1 fight with you?”

“”...”””

Both of them turn silent upon hearing my request.

“Please. I can't let myself be sent to the detention room right now.”

I bowed again.

Upon looking at me like this,

"—you bastard. You really like to spout such nonsense, huh?"

The bald Natsukawa-sempai really despises me as he says,

"You don't want a 2 on 1 battle? Did you forget what you did during the test of courage tournament?"

The test of courage was between the second and third years, and at that time, my summoned beasts fought against them, barely managing to get victory in the end...at that time, I was really agitated when I used the bracelet, because of Himeji-san.

What happened back then? Did I cause Himeji-san to be troubled? Did I do something to hurt Minami? Did I do anything to hurt anyone because I never thought.

Once I think about this, my heart starts to feel heavier by the moment.

"Sorry, please."

I give up on thinking as I beg the pair in front of me.

I can't lose in such a situation. I haven't said to Minami what I did—that I committed the unbelievable acts of handing her diary over to Linne-kun, and the translation over to Takashiro-sempai, and I haven't apologized to her. I can't lose and disappear until Minami finishes her replenishment tests end and comes back.

Natsukawa-sempai looks rather unhappy as he watches me basically beg for my life.

“Sorry Tsunemura. I'll handle this.”

He let his summoned beast take a step forward.

“Thank y—”

“I'm going to change the location. You don't mind, right?”

Natsukawa-sempai walks off while ignoring my thanks. Change places? I don't know what that's going to do...but moving alone allows me to buy some time, and I have no reason to oppose to this.

I agree to go along with him, “it's fine if both sides agree to this” , and the supervising teacher did give the permission.

And after walking for a little while, we head to the field, where all sorts of subject battles are going on.

Natsukawa-sempai stops in front of the humanities field, and looks at the supervising teacher.

“Hey sensei, I want to change the subject. Is it okay?”

The teacher shook his head, 'according to the rules, a battle's not to be interrupted', after that,

“Ahh—is that so?”

Natsukawa-sempai murmurs impatiently, and uses his summoned beast to throw my summoned beast away at breakneck speed.

“!?”

My summoned beast beast can't react due to this sudden movement, and it hits the supervising teacher, standing in the way .

And then, as the teacher was forcefully moved, he ended up in another field, causing an 'interference', and all the summoned beasts inside that field were erased.

“Alright, due to an unfortunate mishap, the field's now gone. Now you can fight using the Japanese History you're good at.”

Natsukawa-sempai said, his tone clearly not intending to hide the fact that he deliberately aimed for it. IT seems he chose to fight me using my specialized subject. Normally, I might be furious at being underestimated, but I don't have such thoughts right now. I even think this is something worth giving thanks for.

“”Summon!””

Natsukawa-sempai and I don't mind the fact that everyone else's running around because of the 'interference', and we call out our summoned beasts in the expanded field.

3-A, Natsukawa Junpei, Humanities (Geography), 225 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Humanities (Japanese History), 242 points

I see the indicated score. This might be the first time I'm fighting someone with a lower score.

"1 on 1, little difference between us. Just the situation I want."

Natsukawa-sempai snorted.

"Sempai, are you talking about a rematch of the test of courage tournament?"

Amazingly, we were also on the field back then. Yuuji didn't take part, but Tsunemura-sempai's not around this time, so it's a real 1 on 1 this time. This might be the perfect situation to end everything between us."

"A rematch? How stupid? If I'm concerned about that, won't I have to see that disgusting face of yours again?"

Natsukawa-sempai's face contorted unhappily.

"I'm just clearing my debt here. We'll settle this now, and I won't have to deal with you slimeball again. You're already in such a disgusting state; I don't want to get involved with you anymore."

Up till now, I've fought these upperclassmen quite a few times. He means he wants to clear all the issues between us this time; the

problem isn't about who won more times, but that he wants to end everything here in a battle, not for the sake of winning, but for the sake of severing ties with me. In other words...he doesn't have any hatred or grudge against me, and he doesn't care about me anymore.

“Don't space out with that stupid rotten expression. We're starting.”

Natsukawa-sempai's summoned beast readies it sword. It's armed with an orthodox western sword and armor, not much different from the the opponents I battled till now.

I let my summoned beast raise the wooden sword, and let it charge into the enemy's clutches.

I just swing the wooden sword down, without using any fancy tricks.

The opponent takes a step back to dodge, and then took a large step forward to swing the sword in its hand.

I block the attack with my wooden sword, and counterattack with it again. The opponent dodges, and again continues to attack.

Right now, I'm feeling most comfortable just having to focus on this battle.

“...This is ridiculous.”

Natsukawa-sempai mutters in the midst of our battle.

I ignore his murmuring as I swing the wooden sword down to hold him off. His summoned beast steps forward to take the attack .

“Argh...!”

“Just go by the wayside and fall dead!”

At this distance, I can't swing the sword or dodge, and the opponent swings a punch. My summoned beast leans back to reduce the damage, but I still took a punch in the abdomen, and was sent flying.

I feel a slight, blunt pain in my abdomen. This is the feedback I'm already used to.

“Don't go panting on me now!”

Naturally, the opponent won't let go of this opportunity as I stagger back, and charges over to attack.

I let my summoned beast raise its wooden sword.

“Tch!”

I thought the opponent was about to swing a punch again, and hurriedly covered my abdomen with a hand.

A hand alone wasn't enough to block the sword the opponent swung down, and so, my summoned beast took a deep slash in the shoulder.

"U...ghh...!"

I'm groaning to the intense pain from the feedback, and Natsukawa-sempai never gave chase, instead saying arrogantly,

"Use that bracelet."

Once he said that, I froze.

The pain I suffered in the battle against Takashiro-sempai flashed in my mind. The intense pain that deflated the air in my lungs, and the pain of being unable to breathe; once I recall that, and once I recalled the conversation from before.

I didn't want to think about it.

"Don't worry, I won't call Tsunemura over even if it's a 2 on 1. There's no need for that in the first place."

Natsukawa-sempai waits for me to get up, not moving his summoned beast at all.

On the other hand, I didn't use the platinum bracelet, just letting my summoned beast stand up normally.

"What? Just use it? Isn't that your specialty?"

"...If the opponent's saying that, I will have to think there's something else, right?"

"Is that so?...well, your call as to whether you want to or not."

Natsukawa-sempai's summoned beast wields the sword in its right hand, and sends a left punch as if he wants me to see it. He's really used to battling.

I focus my attention on the opponent's sword and take it on.

I can clearly see the sword that's swinging down from above. It's a one-handed sword, and if I block his attack with all my strength, using both hands, I'll be able to break his posture and counterattack. It's a good chance.

—right, that's what my mind knew.

"!!"

My body froze up due to the tightly clenched left fist.

And so, my summoned beast stopped its sword swing, and I took more damage because my posture's messed up.

"How boring. What kind of a battle is this?"

3-A, Natsukawa Junpei, Humanities (Geography), 191 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Humanities (Japanese History), 74 points

The updated points are shown.

He glances at the points, and then at my summoned beast, stabbing a strike at it while dodging the vitals.

“Ar...gh...!”

I feel a sharp pain in my calves and hands.

3-A, Natsukawa Junpei, Humanities (Geography), 191 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Humanities (Japanese History), 23 points

My points are depleted as I feel the pain.

“I'll torture you little by little until you have only a little bit left, and then I'll finish you off.”

Natsukawa-sempai said without a hint of anger or grudge against me. That's the attitude of someone who wishes to destroy garbage before throwing it away.

I can't go to the detention room before I actually talk to Minami, but I really don't know what to do after that.

And at this moment, I hear the voices of the cavalry behind me.

“”“”Summon!””””

I hear the familiar voices of the guy from class F. It seems the reinforcements Yuuji talked about have arrived.

"..."

Natsukawa-sempai glanced at the incoming reinforcements, and then at my summoned beast.

And then,

"Tsunemura, they have reinforcements here, just leave this place to the rest. We'll retreat for the time being. We can't possibly be at the frontlines forever."

The Toko-Natsu pair called in the other 3rd years, and proceed to leave.

A little later on, my allies too enter the field.

"How's the situation here, Yoshii?"

Fukumura-kun summons his summoned beast to face off against the enemy as he answers me.

And so, I simply answer him,

"...A very bad situation."

Besides, what happened from before was caused by me."

Upon hearing that, "Is that so?" he said this and showed a bitter grimace.

“I saw the other sides being forced back hard just now on my way here. There's quite some price in this because we focused too much fighting strength in this.”

We used a lot of the second years as bait just to charge into the principal's office. The failed operation meant that the efforts of those defeated was for nothing...because I was not being myself.

“Also, that Tsuchiya and Kudou pair barely managed to make it back alive after being beaten like that. I never thought they'll lose in the field of health education...”

Leaving aside the rest, seeing how those two actually lost in a battle of health education, I can tell how bad the impact of my actions was.

“You'll be sent to the detention room if we were a too little late in escaping just now.”

As he said so, Fukumura-kun always tries to keep his summoned beast away from the opponent's, and he'll go around hiding.

“The detention room's the only place I don't want to go to.”

“Of course. How can we let ourselves get sent there?”

My reasons for not wanting to go there is a little different from Fukumura-kun, but we have the same ideas.

In that sense, we can probably work together.

“Let's try and live on here then, Fukumura-kun.”

“Hm? What nonsense are you saying now? We've always put ourselves as priority, right?”

Those are cold words no matter how I try to interpret it, but to me right now, I'm grateful of that instead.

“Hm, that's the spirit, Fukumura-kun”

“I don't want to be in some detention room or something.”

'Yeah, we rather lose this summoning war than get locked up inside there.”

“Oh, those are rather selfish words there.”

“Haha, we're from F class after all.”

Though I'm laughing now, what I said just now was really what I thought. If we're going to the detention room, I won't be able to apologize to Minami.

I don't want to cause trouble for anyone, so I don't intend to ignore the instructions for the operations. Even if we lose, I do want to end this war as soon as possible—this is what I really thought.

Once I'm thinking about this again, Fukumura-kun suddenly said this.

"Then, Yoshii, you can just retreat for the time being to protect yourself."

".....Eh?"

Once I heard those unbelievable words, I was stunned for that instant.

I can't believe that my classmates from class F, who have the philosophy of sacrificing others to ensure their own survival, would say such things.

But in my surprise,

"No, well..."

Fukumura-kun scratched his head,

"—if I'm with you now, I'll really feel irritated."

"Come back once you get back to being the laughable idiot again" Fukumura-kun told me this, and I was chased out from the summoning field. I end up rooted however because I don't know what to do.

Normally, in such situations, I should go take some replenishment tests, right? I lost a lot of points, and I have lots of allies supporting at where I was. Currently, it's best that I replenish the points of the subjects I'm best at.

...But that option isn't ideal for me now.

“I have to hurry up, meet with Minami, and apologize to her...”

If I start the replenishment tests now, I might miss Minami when she goes back to the battlefield. I can't take the replenishment tests now.

Right now, I can't go to the frontlines or go take the replenishment tests.

But even so, I can't just stand by and waste everyone's time. I don't want to take action because of personal reasons, and I don't want to cause trouble for others again.

In the end, I choose to 'hide somewhere in a corner of the old school building, where there aren't many people around, and run away to buy time if the enemy comes'.

….....

…...

...

Nothing much happened as time passed.

I'm trying to keep watch, but I'm not seriously looking around .

Even though I know how serious the sitaution is, I can't return to the frontlines.

I can't help in any way, and I'm just wasting something without a purpose.

“I'm, really a big idiot...”

I murmur to myself, without anyone else hearing.

I have no purpose in the summoning war.

I just obstructed Himeji-san's progress.

And I revealed Minami's precious feelings to someone else.

“I must at least make him return Minami's diary...”

If I can't get it back using my own abilities, I might as well kneel down and beg. It's useless to Takashiro-sempai anyway, so he might return it to me if I beg hard. Why didn't I think about that at all?

“But even if I do get it back, the fact remains that he read it before, right...?”

I haven't been doing anything, so my mind's repeating the same issues over and over again.

I'm starting to feel frustrated at my own stupidity, and I'm starting to think of dropping everything and run away.

I really want to meet Minami earlier and apologize to her. I've been thinking about this, doing meaningless things.

—And so, after looking around for a while.

“Ah, Aki. What are you doing here?”

I finally met the person I wanted to meet.

“...Minami...”

“Hm? What is it?”

Minami greeted me with her useful, cheerful smile.

“There's something I have to apologize to you for.”

“Even if you suddenly say that you have to apologize for something...I don't really know what you're trying to say because there's too many things you have to apologize for.”

Minami placed her fingers on her chin as she pondered,

“Is it about saying that my breasts are small? Or the peeping incident during the school camp? Or that you did something when you came to my house—”

“That's not it, Minami.”

I cut off Minami's joking words.

That's not it. What I want to apologize for is something more important to Minami, something she did not want anyone else to know of, and I trampled on those feelings.

“Sorry, Minami.”

“So, what's that about?”

I feel ready to vomit out blood as I explain to Minami what I did
,

“I—let Takashiro-sempai and Linne-kun read your important diary.”

That's an unforgivable act to any girl in her youth.

I heard that it contained the precious thoughts Minami had since her first year, that it contained the feelings Minami had for him, how she thought about him all this time.

She has a tomboyish side, but I know that Minami in fact is really gentle, and definitely has a feminine side to her.

It's because of that, I couldn't forgive myself for doing what I did...!

I lower my head and gritted my teeth in anger.

And then, Minami looks on at me,

“What? That's it?”

She just looked disappointed, answering calmly,

“Th-That's!”

“Hm~...it's fine anyway. That sort of thing was read anyway. It's my fault for bringing the diary to school anyway.”

Minami doesn't mind at all as she said this. How's that possible. ..!

“Ah, speaking of which, did you read it, Aki?”

“Me...? I didn't.”

“I see. There's nothing to be worried about then.”

“But that's not the problem—”

“Nope, it's just that small of a problem.”

I leaked Minami's important feelings to an unrelated 3rd party, and Minami just smiled at me.

“I've already confessed anyway.”

“...”

I couldn't understand what she meant as I stood there blankly, even forgetting to apologize.

“Wait, Aki, are you listening?”

Minami waves her hand in front of me while I space out.

Wh-what am I spacing out for? I'm supposed to be apologizing to Minami now, right?

And so, Minami continues on while ignoring me as I recover from the shock.

“Well, leaving aside that—I'm wondering why are you looking so dejected right now though, Aki.”

Once I heard her ask me for my glum look, I'm unable to say anything at that instant.

“...That's...”

“You aren't depressed because of my diary, right? If that's the case, I'm going to beat your face up good.”

Minami then showed an angry look.

Even so, I still intend to argue back against what Minami said.

How can it just be *like this*? She wrote inside it every single day, and it's definitely not something she'll be callous about. She's just acting unconcerned because she's worried, because she's...very kind.

“Minami, I—”

“Besides my diary, something happened to Mizuki too, right?”

“!?”

I gasped.

Once Minami sees me like this, she smiles happily, and says,

“Right now, you have that 'how did you know' look on your face. Of course I know that. Mizuki has been looking weird seriously, and she went to the principal's office with you just now, but never returned. You looked so depressed too”

Minami easily deduced these. Can all these be deduced by a bystander? I don't really know. What I know however is that Minami did say the truth.

“...”

I end up being unable to say anything.

I'm not trying to hide it.

Or rather, I want to say, what kind of person am I.

"Tell me, Aki. Why're you feeling so depressed. What sort of frustrations do you have now?"

I hear Minami's gentle voice.

If I say it out, I'll definitely feel relieved.

Minami wants me to say this because she knows this.

But I can't rely on Minami's kindness again. I did something that's to be hated and scolded for.

"..."

I keep my head lowered as I remain silent

And Minami sighed and said,

"Then, how about this? If you're sorry about the diary, tell me everything now."

It's a condition most suited for me, something I can't refuse.

This line causes me to lose any urge to resist.

The Fifteenth Question

Please translate the following term into English

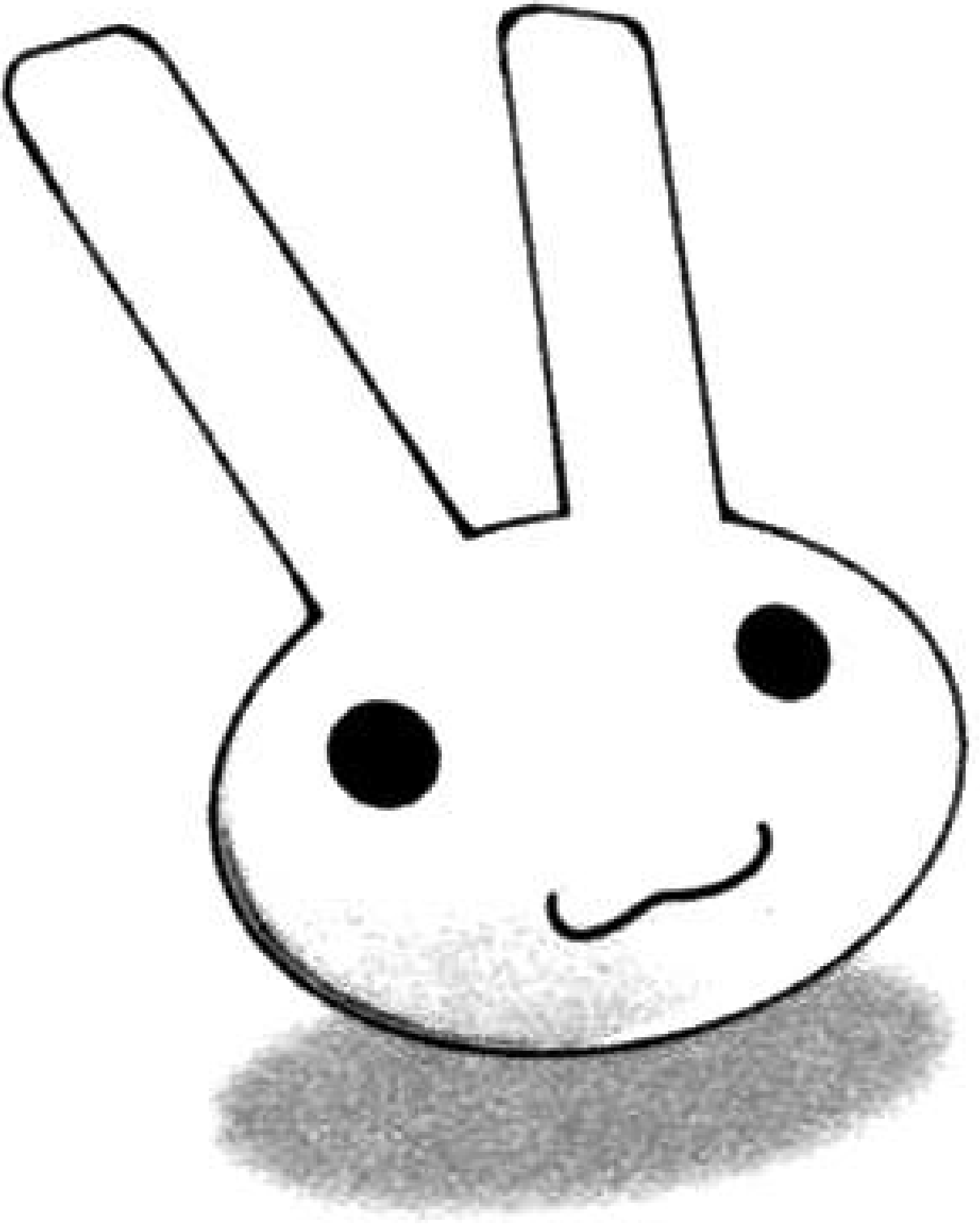
思[6]

Himeji Mizuki's Answer

"Reminscence"

Teacher's Comment:

Correct.



It was during October, while we were in 3rd grade.

I left something in school after class was dismissed, and when I was passing by another classroom, I saw something strange.

That girl was in the classroom, the sunset shining in, writing something on the blackboard silently.

At first, I thought she was scribbling some nonsense onto the blackboard.

However, she was looking too serious to be fooling around.

She kept writing and erasing on the blackboard, and erased and wrote, repeating this over and over again.

What's she doing actually, being so serious like this?

The young me back then was curious, and I quietly watched her from the corridor.

After looking for a while, I can tell from the outlines and the colors of the chalks used that she's practicing how to draw a tree on the blackboard.

s—practicing how to draw a tree on the blackboard? For what purpose?

I was curious as to her reasons, but I was scared of distracting her, so I quietly left her.

On the way back home, I recall the back profile of that girl being so focused.

A few days passed thereafter.

I was curious about what that girl was doing, “What were you planning to do to the blackboard?” and so I nonchalantly asked my friend in the next class.

“The grandpa sensei is about to retire or something, and isn't going to be a teacher anymore.”

I do know of that grandpa sensei. He's the teacher from the next class, quiet and gentle, and though he's scary when angry, he's still a popular teacher.

“So on graduation day everyone decided to write large 'thank yous' on the blackboard. We then chose some people to 'write words on the blackboard' and some people to 'fold paper cranes'.

Once I heard these words, I somewhat knew the reason why she was facing the blackboard.

But she wasn't writing any word on the blackboard. Was she in charge of drawing a tree?

“Eh? Drawing a tree? Hm...maybe there's someone in charge of this, but I don't remember it. It'll just get covered by all the decorations on the blackboard anyway.”

I recall what I saw a few days ago. That girl was practicing in a corner of the blackboard. There's no way he could see it once the decorations are all put up.

“You don't have to thank me for that, but you really ask such weird things, Aki-kun.”

Once I bid farewell to this friend who answered my question, I suddenly thought.

That girl's a little silly to practice her drawing so seriously in a place she can't be seen.

And suddenly, I felt a sense of familiarity with that girl rising within me. I've been called stupid and useless many times as well anyway.

Once the new year arrived, the girl and I end up in the same class.

A lot of things happened. We became pet caretakers together, and I gradually got closer with her.

And then, right when the impression of 'the girl who quietly practiced her drawing on the blackboard after school' was about to fade away.

That girl ended up in hospital because of her body's condition.

Our class decided in unison to send her a get-well-soon card, and I only wrote 'I'll definitely go look for you!'. I'm not good at writing essays, but if a friend's staying in the hospital, I'll definitely visit her.

A week passed from the moment that girl started to stay in the hospital, 'Himeji-san's about to recover', and our homeroom teacher told us this, and so, I decided to visit her that night. As for why I chose to go at night, it's because her family members will not be there at night, and she'll definitely feel lonely. If I go, I'll definitely see her being shocked.

If there's no one she can talk with, she's probably watching the TV, right?

Will she be reading a book quietly?

Or did she bring a handheld game to play?

I wondered as I sneaked by the big sister nurses, arrived at the room, and watched through the slightly ajar door.

“...uu...Uuu...”

—the girl who I thought was obedient and carefree was sobbing as she studied.

I recalled the scene I saw in the classroom before I knew her name.

That girl was quietly practicing her drawing in the classroom, where nobody else was looking. She was practicing a tree that wouldn't be seen.

When she was in charge of the pet caretaking, she was even praised by the teacher 'she's so hardworking even though she was forced to do the job'.

And then, 'I have a lot of things I can't do, so I have to at least work hard for what I can do' that girl answered.

The girl I had interest in wasn't foolish.

To her, no matter how minor it may be, she'll do things with all her might. She'll focus all her efforts, her might, and will do things with everything she's got. Even in this empty ward room, she continues to work hard, enduring the loneliness as she sobbed.

As I watched how that girl's focused mannerism, I found myself falling for her.

That, I suppose, was my first love.

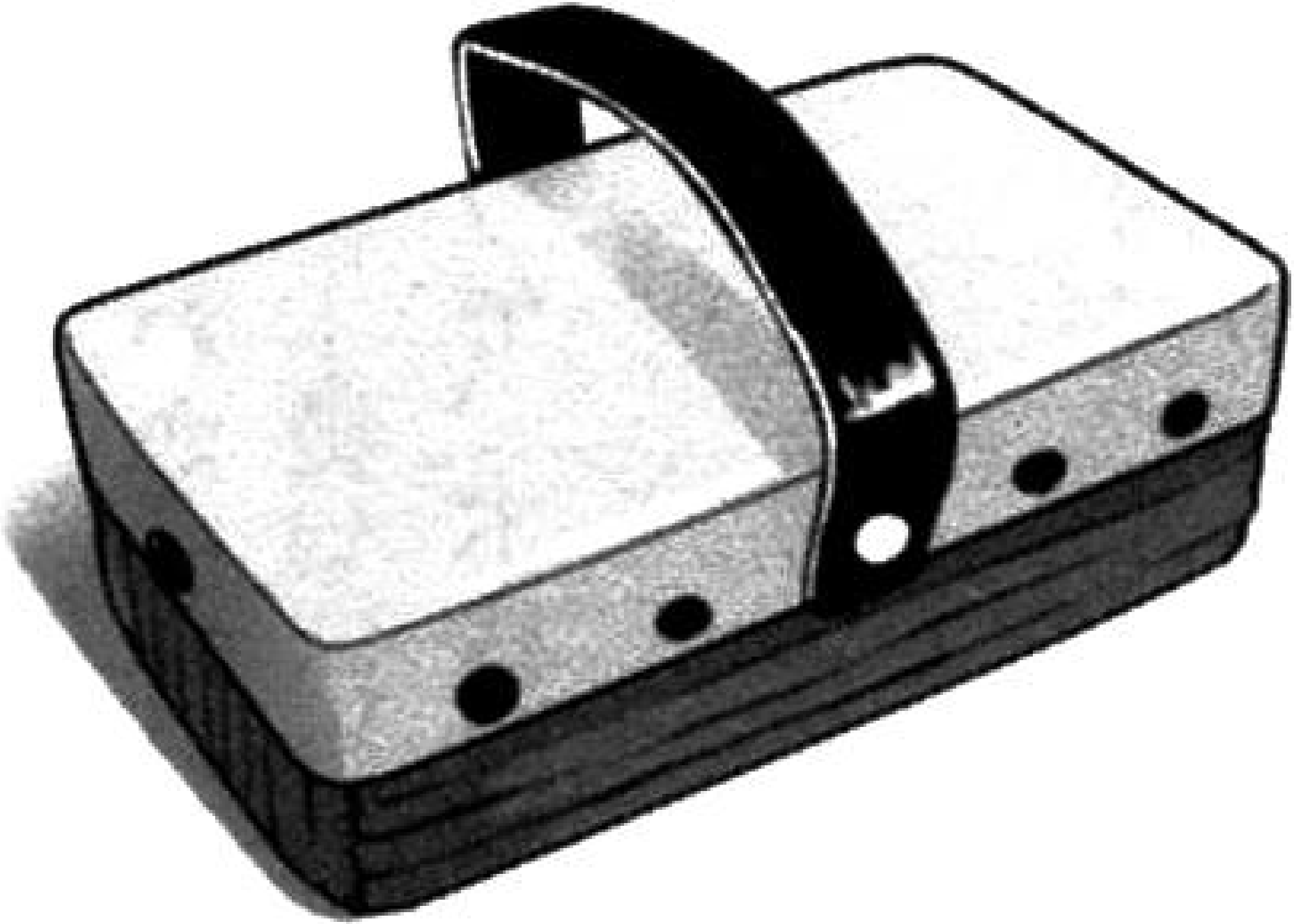
The Sixteenth Question

Please answer the following question:

1. In the equation 4 sin X + 3 cos 3X = 2, solve for X when X is in the first quadrant.

2. Which equation does Sin (A + B) equate to? Please choose from options 1 to 4.

1. sin A + cos B
2. sin A - cos B
3. sin A cos B
4. sin A cos B + cos A sin B



Himeji Mizuki's answer

"1: $X = \pi/6$, 2: 4"

$4\sin x + 3\cos 3x = 2$

$4\sin x + 3\cos(2x+x) = 2$

$4\sin x + 3(\cos 2x\cos x - \sin 2x \sin x) = 2$

$4\sin x + 3[(2\cos^2 x - 1)(\cos x) - 2\sin x\cos x(\sin x)] = 2$

$4\sin x + 3[2\cos^3 x - \cos x - 2\sin^2 x\cos x] = 2$

let $\sin x = a$ $\cos x = b$

$4a + 3[2b^3 - b - 2a^2 b] = 2$

$4a + 6b^3 - 3b - 6a^2 b = 2$

$2a(2-3ab) + 3b(2b^2 - 1) = 2$

$2a(2-3ab) + 3b(\underbrace{2-2a^2-1}_{(1-2a^2)}) = 2$

* $\cos^2 x = 1 - \sin^2 x$
$b^2 = 1 - a^2$

$4a - 6a^2 b - 6a^2 b + 3b = 2$

$4a - 12a^2 b + 3b = 2$

$4\sin x - 12\sin^2 x\cos x + 3\cos x = 2$

$2(2\sin x - 1) - 3\cos x(4\sin^2 x - 1) = 0$

$2(2\sin x - 1) - 3\cos x(2\sin x + 1)(2\sin x - 1) = 0$

$(2\sin x - 1)(2 - 6\cos x \sin x - 3\cos x) = 0$

$(2\sin x - 1)(2 - 3\sin 2x - 3\cos x) = 0$

$2\sin x = 1$ $\quad 2 - 3\sin 2x - 3\cos x = 0$

$\sin x = \frac{1}{2}$ $\quad$ N.S.

$x = \frac{\pi}{6}$

Teacher's Comment

Correct answer

Yoshii Akihisa's Answer

"I do not know."

Teacher's Comment:

What happened to that 'I'll just write anything here as an answer' attitude you used to have?

“Practicing how to draw a tree...”

“She was really bad at it to be honest, so bad that I couldn't tell what she was drawing even after looking at it for a while.”

When she was young, Himeji-san was simply practicing how to draw on the blackboard with all her effort. No matter how bad, how clumsy she was at it, no matter how I couldn't tell what she was drawing at all on first glance, she worked so hard back then.

Even if that was meaningless, even foolish to others.

But it really makes...

“It really touched me.”

No matter how bad, how clumsy she was, no matter how she wasn't suited to drawing.

I can tell from her method that she was trying her best to express her 'thanks'. No matter how many times she draws that bad and clumsy piece of a drawing, and erased it again, or whether it would be buried amongst everyone's messages, she didn't mind at all.

She wouldn't gain any merit out of this.

Nobody would thank her.

She simply wanted to express the 'thanks' in her heart to that person, and practiced for that sake.

Once I found how devoted Himeji-san can be to a certain cause, I started to find myself curious about her.

“Did the feelings in Mizuki's drawing reach that teacher?”

“...No, she didn't managed to do so.”

I was curious as to what happened to that girl after that, so on the graduation day itself, I sneaked into the neighbouring classroom to check on that blackboard.

But that blackboard never had the picture of the tree that girl practiced so hard to draw.

“I have a very weak body, and I was hospitalized.”

Once we were in the same class, I recalled the words she said when I chatted with her.

"My body's weak, I'm slow witted, I'm clumsy...so that's why I have to work harder."

I felt that she was 'a little weird' when she could say such a thing after so much effort had been wasted.

But I was wrong. That wasn't the case.

"After we ended up in the same class, I visited Himeji-san when she was in the hospital—and I saw her crying as she studied in the ward room."

How could she possibly have any thoughts after all her efforts had been wasted?

There was no way she could not have felt anything after her efforts were for naught despite so much effort.

She went through lots of hardships, and she was so anguished that she was crying out sadly.

She however gritted her teeth as she continued to do what she could do. That's truly very noble.

In my eyes, that Himeji-san back then really was someone admirable.

Those efforts will definitely not be wasted, and I believed that what awaited this girl, who worked hard and devoted herself so much, would never be hardship alone. I would never allow that.

Right, that was what I thought.

“And I ended up getting in her way...! She entered class F in high school because of her weak body, and I ended up preventing her from getting the fruits of her hard work!”

“Aki...”

Himeji-san never changed even when she entered High school.

She worked as hard as she did back then.

She's as clumsy as she was back then.

And like before—she didn't get any fruits from her hard work.

“And that confession just now...! There wasn't a need to confess to me, but she lied to me because she's scared of hurting me..!”

What did I do for her? I said that I was doing things for her sake , but didn't I end up frustrating her...!?

“Aki.”

I heard Minami's gentle voice.

Before I know it, Minami's hands were gently clasping onto mine.

“I'm sorry. I actually lied just now.”

This sudden line caused me to ask back without thinking,

“...lied...?”

What did she lie about—

“Well, I just said that 'I confessed' already, didn't I? That was a lie to you. I haven't confessed yet.”

Minami said to me 'it's meaningless since I confessed already' when I apologized to her because of the diary, but now she's saying it's a lie.

“Minami, why did you say that—”

“It's going to be the same thing either way. I'm going to confess to you now.”

“Eh...?”

Before I could understand what she was trying to say, Minami places a kiss on my lips, so gently that it never felt like it ended on my lips. She then retreated, and smiled.

"I like you, Aki, ever since the time when we were in our First Years."

Her smile's so beautiful, and I can't help but be amazed by it.

“Aki, you just said that Mizuki's confession wasn't real, right?”

I remain speechless, and Minami doesn't mind as she continues,

“Do you think my confession to you is a lie too? Do you think I'm pitying you just because you're dejected?”

I can only stand blankly, looking all disoriented because of this sudden happening.

“If you don't believe, I can let you read my diary, you know? I've been writing all about you from the time First Year began.”

Minami's large eyes are staring right at me.

I can tell from her expression that she's not lying that she really—likes me.

Because of this, I kept listening to her quietly.

“Aki, you can't lie when you confess to someone. I'm trying to comfort you now, but if I just wanted to comfort you, I won't confess to you. I confessed to you like this because I really like you.”

We spent about 2 years together ever since we enrolled in Fumitzuki Gakuen, and I know how gentle of a girl Minami is, how she really cares for her friends, how compassionate she is.

But even so, she won't confess just for the sake of a friend. She can only do so when she truly likes someone.

“But I do find it a little annoying how you fidget around like this, and I really hate you for blaming yourself and regretting your actions.”

After saying that, she stared at me with more conviction.

“—and I really hate you when you said that a girl, who summoned all her courage to confess to you, is lying.”

“...”

Minami's words caused me to feel guilty.

I do feel that she has many mixed feelings within that line she said.

“I still remember the French words you said to me when we were in our First Year, Aki.”

Now that she mentioned the French words I said in our Freshman year, I recalled the time when we just got acquainted.

When she told me later on that 'I mixed up French with German ', I was so embarrassed that my face was burning.

“What you did back then was so clumsy and hard to understand, but I'm happy that you had the heart to do so. You worked so hard for me like a clumsy kid.”

Minami smiles as she says this.

“Mizuki definitely thinks this too. You're not good at studying, but you worked so hard for her sake. How can she be troubled when she'll be happy about that instead. You'll feel happy if it's for your sake too, right?”

Minami's words repeat themselves in my heart.

—What will I think if it's me?

I already knew that Himeji-san's clumsy, but she really works hard .

I was really attracted by how she reached to express her own thanks to someone.

It didn't matter whether her efforts paid off. I feel that the way she worked so hard is mesmerizing. That's why I had feelings for her.

As Minami had said, while what I did was clumsy and hard to understand, but she's really happy that I made the effort to do so. Himeji-san's the same too.

Even if there's no good result from it, I do know how charming it is to see someone being so devoted and hardworking.

In that case, Himeji-san and Minami's impression of me is—

"Aki, if you have the time to doubt the confession, why don't you think of something else. Someone came to invite Mizuki to study overseas, right?"

If we're talking about Himeji-san going overseas, I think there's only the option of either 'watching her leave' or 'wanting to make her stay'.

If it's for the sake of her future, I should smile and watch her leave. It's not that it's a permanent farewell though; as long as her parents remain in Japan, there's still a chance that I'll meet her.

If I try to make her stay, I'm just thinking about what I want.

A selfish thought of wanting to be with her, to laugh and cry with her, to be in this school with her every day.

"Aki, do you know that Mizuki's not thinking that you're distracting her. She's worried that 'you'll think you're obstructing her' if you know about her going overseas, and that you'll blame yourself."

Minami never talked about 'sending her off' or 'making her stay' ; she simply dispelled my misunderstanding, and told me the truth so that I won't make any wrong decisions.

If she doesn't think that I'm bothering her, and she doesn't want to leave me, I really hope that Himeji-san can be together with us, as part of our regular gang, enjoying ourselves in school like usual every day.

But we still have a long way to go in our lives later on. If we live normally, we might be able to live for another 60 years or more. And...is it really the right decision to cut down on her future options just to be with her for a few more years?

“You have to think through this well, Aki. You don't want to regret the choice you make after that.”

Minami's eyes stare right at me, showing a reflection of myself.

It's just as Minami had said; I don't have the time to doubt the confession. There's something more important to me than that, I have to choose the correct choice, but I have no idea what to choose at all.

“Haha...I really don't know.”

I don't know which option to choose.

If I follow my original motive of doing things for her sake, I should smile and watch her leave. It's an overseas trip, but we still have chances to meet. Minami came back from Germany, and my

parents are overseas, so being overseas isn't a faraway thing for her.

But I really wish to spend time in the same school as her. Maybe this time isn't considered long in our lives, but to me, they're really important.

Also, how do I respond to Minami and Himeji-san's confessions ? I really don't know my own feelings either.

I do have feelings for Himeji-san, but I also do find Minami charming as someone of the opposite gender.

Looking at how bad I am at choosing, I really hate myself to a point of wanting to punch myself.

Shall I send Himeji-san away? Shall I reciprocate Minami's feelings? There are reasons why I can't ignore them, but for me to make a decision is too—

“There's no time left.”

The familiar, unexpected voice can be heard from behind me.

After saying those sudden words, I felt a hard hit on my back before I could even turn around, and I fall onto the floor weakly.

“!? What!? What!?”

This sudden happening caused me to feel confused and panicky .

That familiar big guy is standing in front of this shocked me.

“There's no time left, Akihisa. We don't have the time to let you laze around. Go take the replenishment tests for humanities.”

The guy who gave me a hard kick while I'm in my thoughts is my nemesis and bad friend—Sakamoto Yuuji.

In place of me on the floor, Minami walks to Yuuji and says,

“W-wait a moment, Sakamoto. How can we allow him to take the replenishment tests now? Aki has something he has to really think about—”

“Like I care. If he has to think about it, think while taking the test.”

Yuuji randomly answers.

“But Aki doesn't have that intellect...”

Minami looks at me worriedly.

It's true that I'm not good at using my brain, and I can be said to be a buffoon at this. I'm already at my wits end just thinking about something important to both of us, so making me take the replenishment tests at the same time will be beyond my brain capacity. It's too hard for me to do two things at once.

“Listen up, Akihisa.”

But Yuuji stares at me right in the eyes as he says,

“The human brain is divided into the left and right sides. You dare to say that you can't do it even then?”

“...It might be possible in theory...”

“No, Aki, it's because it's divided in two halves that they have different functions, you know.”

Even if it's possible in theory, I can't possibly do such a highly difficult skill.

As I continue to be frustrated, Yuuji continues,

“How you intend to deal with Himeji's overseas schooling and Shimada's confession is up to you.”

Yuuji's right. He's not the person directly involved in all these, and it's just me being frustrated due to my stubbornness.

“But if we lose this summoning war, we'll be forced to take what others don't want. You understand what I mean?”

I try to rack my brain after it had thought of too many things, and was at the point of blowing up, trying my best to understand what he meant.

If we lose, the second years won't be able to get the higher class facilities, and Himeji-san won't get the facilities she deserves. From what motives are, and what Himeji-san's parents think—

“Goodness, if you can't understand, I'll make it simple for you.”

Yuuji watches me struggle in my thinking, and showed an evil grin on his wild looking face.

“Are we really that kind enough to let those 3rd years get everything?”

After he gave me such a simple question, I recalled the battles against the 3rd years in this summoning war.

Yuuji lost out in strategic planning.

I was completely beaten by Takashiro-sempai. Himeji-san was sent to the detention room to protect me.

Muttsurini was toyed by Kogure-sempai, Hideyoshi and Minami were completely thrashed by the Toko-Natsu pair.

“...I see. This is really easy to understand.”

No matter how little I think about it, I felt that I had to take revenge for this no matter what.

We're not some kind beings to let everything end without leaving any regrets behind...!

"Since you understand, go back, get your answer, and get a high score to be able to beat that bastard Takashiro."

Yuuji makes it sound so easy, but neither of these are easy to do. This guy really can make such reckless requests.

"Don't just say things because they don't concern you, Yuuji."

"It's simple after all, simpler than just enduring everything and losing."

I do agree with this wholeheartedly. This fact is so simple to understand, and I don't have a chance of arguing back.

That's why my answer's simple too.

"Understood. I'll get the highest score up till now."

I have to respond to Yuuji's reckless requests if we're going to end everything.

"Anyway, are you really alright? I don't want to find out that the second years lost once I return from the replenishment tests."

"Are you kidding me? I don't care how it ends, but I'm not going to lose to those guys no matter what."

"I do agree with that."

Right now, how can we let this rest without winning? We must do all we can for the sake of victory.

As I attend the replenishment tests with such thoughts.

“Ah...wait, Aki.”

Minami called out for me as she tugged at my sleeve.

“Hm? What is it?”

“Erm...there's still one other thing.”

Minami looks really emotional as she says this,

“I just said that Mizuki and I won't confess because of pity, and we didn't do it. So Aki, don't do it because of kindness or pity—”

“I understand. I'll think through it properly and get the answer.”

“...Right.”

After saying this to Minami, I race off to the old school building.

I have to serious think about my own matters, Minami's matters, and Himeji-san's matters.

So that I won't leave any regrets behind.

I watch Aki run away, and Sakamoto comes over to talk to me.

"You alright with that, Shimada?"

"...With what?"

"Well...how do I say it? If you never said anything, Himeji will leave, and Akihisa will be left depressed. From your standpoint—"

I immediately answer without waiting for Sakamoto to finish his words.

What's good or not good about it—

"I didn't have a choice either."

It really can't be helped.

He's stupid, foolish, and doesn't understand other people's feelings.

But he's enthusiastic, kind and straightforward.

He's considerate to others, willing to work hard for other people's sake.

"I—like that Aki."

The Aki who suspected Mizuki's confession isn't the Aki I like; I couldn't let myself see Aki being like that.

I can't let myself not like the person I like.

"...Shimada"

“What?”

“You're a good girl. That's a waste for Akihisa's level.”

“Thanks. I'll just brag about those words to Shouko then.”

“Hey! That's a foul!”

Sakamoto already confessed before, but it's interesting seeing such a little joke causing him to be so awkward.

“Are you done with your words?”

“...(Stealthily appears).”

Kinoshita and Tsuchiya, who had been watching from afar, appears. They probably knew that we had something to say, and deliberately hid themselves. In that case, I'm really grateful for that .

“It's still a little embarrassing thinking about how those words were overheard.”

Once I saw Kinoshita and Tsuchiya, they say to me,

“What? Just relax, Shimada.”

“...We almost couldn't hear anything.”

“Ah, really?”

"Yeah...but even if we didn't, we could at least guess what you two were talking about."

"...A fact everyone knows."

"Ahahaha. What are you talking about? How can you know without hearing?"

""Your confession to Akihisa—""

"I'll wring your necks if you say anything more."

How did it get exposed anyway! You guys were clearly eavesdropping on us, right?

"We know you for a while longer than Himeji, so we can easily guess whatever you would say to Akihisa in that situation."

"(nods)...Hideyoshi can understand what women thinks."

"Muttsurini, that's not what I'm trying to get at."

But it's as what they said. After I came back to Japan, other than my family, these guys are the ones I spent the most time with. It's not strange for them to guess what I would do in that case.

"But even if you guess so, it's a form of gentleness not to say it out, right?"

"Don't say that. We'll do our best to help you two, so just a little teasing isn't much here."

"...We'll do our best for our friends."

Seriously...I have to hand it to these guys.

So they not only treated Aki as a friend, but me too. They'll also do their best for an outcome everyone can accept.

Great, now I can confess—to that coolest Aki and tell him what I feel.

"...Thanks."

I shyly whisper, and Kinoshita and Tsuchiya smile away. What, those smiles are giving me that, 'that's just like you, Shimada' vibe.

"Speaking of which, what do you intend to do, Yuuji?"

"I'll think of all sorts of things, but we'll need to rely on Akihisa's power for the final bit. Our job is to hang on until he comes back from the replenishment tests.

"Hm...but the 3rd years should have somewhat recovered from the damage caused by our sudden attack. They probably want to settle things now. Can we really hang on for that long?"

That sudden attack just now caused quite some damage to the enemy, but we were worn out more than them, and the balance in power is worsened to a point of being more than 3 times. In this situation, we can't possibly last until the replenishment tests are over.

But,

“We won't lose.”

Sakamoto casually denies such doubts.

“We'll win if you guys will help.”

Win, not lose, not draw. Sakamoto says that we can beat the 3rd years.

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

That's such a nostalgic feeling.

What he says is completely baseless, but for some reason, I feel that what he says is correct. It's just like when we first entered our Second Year.

“Remember guys, we're—”

“”””The strongest!!”””

“That's right.”

After hearing our replies, Sakamoto nods in satisfaction, showing his usual evil grin.

The Seventeenth Question

Please fill in the answer to the following blank:

Light is made of waves, and ( )

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

Light is made of waves, and (particles).

Teacher's Comment:

Correct

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:

Light is made of waves, and (I am a cat). [7]

Teacher's Comment:

I do find it amazing that it reads so smoothly.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

Light is made of waves, and (a hero's armor)

Teacher's Comment:

Now that is the Yoshii-kun I know of.

MINAMI SHIMADA

“Alright, I'm going to explain the strategy right now.”

I gather the few remaining survivors in front of the old school building to stand guard, and say to the other participants in the operation gathered in D class on the 4th level of the building,

“F class really is amazing to not give up even in this situation.”

“...I think that's class F's strength.”

“We're not strong at all!”

It just feels a little strange, but I wonder if those A class girls are praising us or looking down on us. This is our only strong point thought; some may think of us as being stubborn, and others may think of us as having strong wills.

“What's our situation now, Sakamoto? I don't know at all because I was taking the replenishment tests just now.”

“Well, you're right. Let's explain the situation before the operation begins.”

“In that case, Sakamoto-kun, please allow me to explain.”

Kubo offers to explain the current situation in my place. As I've been going around preparing for the operation, this guy and Shouko are more aware of what's going on now.

“Is that so? My bad. I'll leave it to you, Kubo.”

"Yes, I understand."

Kubo uses a hand to hold the note containing the remaining fighting strengths, and starts to explain,

"First, our remaining forces. Our class A still has half its members left."

Other than those protecting Shouko, our year representative, everyone else had been outside the old school building preventing the enemy from attacking. We had been keeping A class' fighting strength up till now, but seeing how even they're being worn out, I can tell that we're really being beaten quite badly.

"And then, there is a group of B class students taking part in the replenishment tests...about 20% of them survived."

Nemoto ended up on standby at the back because of an unfortunate incident, and thanks to that, B class still managed to survive.

"Unfortunately, classes C and E were completely annihilated. D class has around 10% left."

The representatives of C and E classes were defeated in battle, and had to be withdrawn. D class is currently about to be defeated because of the defeats from those two classes.

After explaining till this point, Kubo checks the details on his note, and nudged his glasses[8], saying,

“And finally, class F—has 60% of its members still alive and active.”

“6-60%!?”

“Class F was fighting on the frontlines, right? Why're they able to last so long and even come here here alive!?”

Kudou and the older Kinoshita sister are really surprised.

“There's nothing surprising about that.”

“That's our strength after all.”

Sugawa and Fukumura are gathered here for the upcoming operation, and grin haughtily as they face their shocked looks.

“But no matter what—”

The older Kinoshita sister's still in shock as she says,

“Maybe you don't understand what our F class' strength lies in!”

It's a cliché to say what it is. I won't explain things here.

However, we do have a strength others can't copy,

“”””Don't underestimate our kneeling!!””””

“Why did you say it when I tried to change the topic!?”

"...Ah, they have some dirt on the foreheads."

"Ahaha...you basically begged for them to let you go, didn't you ..."

"We really can't learn from them though..."

I suppose giving up on their own prides to survive can be considered some sort of strength...right?

"An-Anyway! The current situation is as Kubo has said! I'm going to explain the strategy now."

I shout to change the awkward atmosphere here. Shimada sensed my intents *goodness gracious* and seems to say this as she adds on,

"Right now, we can only attack the opposing representative if we want to win. What do you intend to do?"

"I intend to sneak amongst the enemies and attack."

A frontal attack's impossible now, so we can only bet everything on this.

"...Sneak amongst the enemies?"

"But no matter what you say, they're standing guard right now.. ."

Shouko and Kudou simply thinks that we're able to break through the enemies just by sneaking it. There's no strategy for us to take such a simple plan though.

“That's why we need the guys from F class, and Hideyoshi.”

“Kinoshita...ahh, I see how it is.”

“...To think you can think of it every single time.”

“”””???”””

I see that there're different reactions from the usual, and ignore them as I continue,

“The strategy this time is simple. We're going to take on the attackers and beat them. Hideyoshi will then use some make-up to turn Sugawa and the reason—”

“We'll go take on Takashiro with that 'we're back from our replenishment tests' look, right?”

“If we defeat him like this, we're be the MVP!”

“Yeah, that's right.”

These guys are used to fighting, and they won't falter even when enemies surround them.

“Hideyoshi's preparing the make-up in another classroom. Just get ready to go on further instructions.”

“Seriously, looks like we have no choice here.”

“We'll leave it to you, the shining beacons for us second years.”

“”Leave it to us!””

Sugawa and the rest leave this D classroom with enthusiasm.

They do have ability and guts—and most importantly, they're stupid, which makes them easy to use.

“Then, Sakamoto, what do you intend to do after using Sugawa and the rest as pawns?”

Shimada watches them leave in amazement, and then asked me this. Pawns? Isn't that such an ugly term to use? We should call them the foundation for our futures.

But it's a fact that they'll be sacrificed.

“Do you know what Takashiro's personality is like?”

“Eh? I do know he's easily bluffed...”

“Yeah. I couldn't really tell here, maybe because he's all tense in this summoning war. This fact however won't change though, or rather, it'll be better for us if he's being wary for us.”

“...Why?”

"What should be his allies are actually enemies in disguise—if this ends up happening again, how would someone easily fooled react?"

"(Nods)...I see."

"You really thought about a lot of things, Sakamoto."

"I'm honored to be praised by you."

Takashiro understands very well that he's easily bluffed. What'll happen if someone like him can't trust anyone around him?

"In that case, just leave me alone and not have anyone defend me."

Kudou clapped her hands. She's right; there's only one objective here, to create a situation where Takashiro's not defended by anyone.

And for this say—

"It's best if we can disguise ourselves as those that can approach Takashiro easily. The Toko-Natsu pair, for example."

We'll first disguise ourselves as those guys and attack Takashiro a few times. Once he starts to be imprisoned by his own doubt, he'll think that everyone around him are all his enemies, and in that case, Takashiro will be alone again. This works better on someone who knows that he's easily bluffed.

"In other words, we have to beat the ones we have to disguise."

"Right."

There's a need to restrain those we need to disguise and rob their freedom. The best method of doing this is to beat them in summoning battles and send them to the detention room.

The problem is that those guys are strong A class members...

"Are you fine with taking on those guys, Shimada?"

"Of course, I can't possibly let it end after having lost all this while."

Shimada answers without hesitation even though her opponents are the 3rd years from A class. Good answer.

"Next, Muttsurini and Kudou. I'm going to make you two guard the gate using your specialty subjects. I don't plan to let anyone else stay here."

"Eh? Erm, though I'm okay with that..."

Kudou looks a little glum.

If these two are together in a battle of health education, there's no way to break through them...as long as the enemy isn't something they can't get along with.

"Are you sure about that, Sakamoto-kun? If Aiko and Tsuchiya-kun are at such an obvious place."

"Right, a woman, like that Kogure for example, will appear there."

It's very important to break through us head on if they want to break through to this old school building we're defending with all our lives, and as the other sides are all very narrow, the only way to send in a large number of people is to go through the front entrance. If those two are the ones defending such a place, I'll send her in too if I were the opponent.

"But that's just what I want. If we're going to execute this plan I just mentioned, it's very important to lure away that woman, who's always with Takashiro, since she's able to see through this strategy."

"That's not what I mean, Sakamoto-kun. What I'm saying here is that Muttusurini-kun will be deceived by her!"

"...Understood. I accept this mission."

"Muttsurini-kun!?"

Muttsurini cuts off Kudou's words as he nod indifferently, like it's not a big deal.

"I'll leave it to you, Muttsurini."

"...(Nods)."

"Now's not the time to nod! I think it's better for Muttsurini-kun to go somewhere else after all..."

"...I refuse."

Muttsurini again cuts off Kudou's words.

"......Humph."

And so, Kudou stares at Muttsurini intently.

"...Why're you giving me such a look."

"Are you actually thinking that if you accept this mission, you'll be able to see that upperclassman in her lewd getup again, Muttsurini-kun?"

"...! (Panics)"

Muttsurini denies it with that usual action of his, and I continue to explain,

"Right. Up next is the positions of the other members. If we're going to last till the end of the replenishment tests, there's a need to block the path leading to Shouko with all our might. The details are—"

I draw a simple map on the blackboard, pick the names from the namelist Shouko and Kubo made and position them. We lost quite a lot of people, but it still took us some time explaining things to everyone.

….....

…...

…

“Understood, Sakamoto-kun. Is there anything else you need us to do?”

“Hm...what exactly?”

The older Kinoshita sister asked, and I answer with a hand on my chin. As for what else to do...

“Nothing.”

“…Huh?”

“All that's left is to waste time until the enemy comes. Just chat all you want.”

The older Kinoshita sister, who has a serious personality, doesn't seem too happy about this as she watches me wordlessly,

“I say, Sakamoto-kun...it's late given that we left everything to you, but is this really alright?”

“Yeah, it's alright. The instruction to sneak into the enemy has been given. Those people here just need to buy time for Akihisa to take the replenishment tests.”

The enemy hasn't intended to attack us seriously, and if we all go take our replenishment tests, we won't be able to handle them if they attack us. There's no choice other than to wait.

“Hm...but you want us to chit-chat in such a situation...”

“...It's troubling.”

“Ahaha, to put it, it somehow feels weird. We have nothing to do even though a great battle's about to being now.”

A class isn't used to such a situation, and while they're murmuring away, someone pushes the classroom door aside and enters.

“What's with you people? I thought you're being cornered, but you look rather relaxed here.”

“Hideyoshi, are you done with the disguises?”

“Call it make-up instead of disguise. It's basically okay.”

Hideoshi nods and walks into the classroom. What we have to do now is to immobilize the ones we're disguising, and the only thing we can do is to wait for the enemy to attack.

“Then, Yuuji, are you really able to handle this calmly?”

“Not at all.”

“Well, I guess so.”

Right now, the enemy only has to wait for us to be worn out, and what they have to do is to formally attack once we're battered and beat the representative Shouko. Once they do that, everything will be over. Our second years facilities will be degraded, and Himeji will be advised by Akihisa and her parents to go overseas. Such an outcome is easy to understand.

“Normally, we would have given up~”

“Right. If I'm in the 3rd year, I'll be thinking of what to do after this war.”

Kudou and Kinoshita said. It's as they said, Takashiro's victory and our loss is clear for all to see.

The blueprint Takashiro drew is almost a reality. That guy must be laughing away, since the plan he spent so much time, thought and effort on is about to bear fruit.

“...But I won't let him get what he wants.”

If it's almost there, it means it's still not complete.

We let that bastard do whatever he wanted for so long. He interfered in our battle against C class, got in the way of our wish of beating A class, toyed with Shimada and Himeji's hearts...and made Shouko cry. I won't be able to die a peaceful death if I let it end like this.

“““...”””

Everyone present start to ponder. Each of them has their reasons for not wanting to lose.

For their friends, love, for pride. To any bystander, fighting for such reasons may be laughable. A student's duty is just to study, and in this sort of situation, we might end up being scolded. We might even end up being scorned upon, seen as idiots.

But everyone here does not want to back down now.

“Sakamoto, the enemy's here! They're finishing attacking at full strength!”

Our whistle blower classmates raced into the classroom, along with the ones Hideyoshi did make-up on. It looks like the time to settle this has come.

Now then, how will this summoning war between school years end up? Will we win, or the 3rd years win? One has to win here, and there is no overtime.

“Listen up, you guys! This is the final battle! Grit your teeth and get ready to go with all your might!”

“”“WOOOH!”””

“We're only aiming to win! It doesn't matter whether we're idiots or ordinary people or smart people! Everyone's to do whatever they can do!”

KOUTA & HIDEYOSHI

“”“WOOOH!”””

“We're definitely...going to win this battle!”

“”“Alright!”””

Just watch, 3rd years...! I'm going to smash those heads of yours and show you how capable these idiots you look down on really are!

The Eighteenth Question

Please answer the following question:

Beginning from ( ), females begin to develop unique characteristics when their secondary sexual characteristics are developed.[9]

Kudou Aiko's answer:

“Menarche refers to the first menstruation. A Japanese's average menstruation during the 20th year of the Showa era [10] occurs around 14-15, and currently, it has been brought forward to around 12. According to analysis, the improvement in nutrition is a major factor in boosting puberty. Recent results however has shown that such trends have slowed down to a point of stagnation. ”

Teacher's Comment:

Who exactly are you?

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:

“What we call Menarche refers to the first stage of menses. In medical terms, the menstrual period is called menstruation, and the first menstruation is called Menarche. The body mass is highly correlated to the age of Menarche, and in most situations, such an occurrence happens when the body mass is 43kg, so the age does

differ between people. The average age in Japan is 12. Besides body mass, the age of Menarche is also affected by race, climate, social environment and nutrition."

Teacher's Comment:

Seriously, who are you people?

Shimada Minami's answer:

"Coming-of-age."

Teacher's Comment:

I do feel there are some personal wishes hidden in this reply.

KOUTA TSUCHIYA

3-B, Yamashita Hideo, Foreign Language, Unable to battle.

Vs

2-A, Kinoshita Yuuko, Foreign Language, 522 points.

Yuuko's summoned beast slices down an attacking enemy.

Our job's to guard the emergency exit. The enemy can't get past Tsuchiya and Aiko, so they have to get by from the back, and that's where we deal with them. This side isn't as large as the main entrance, and there's only so much space to fight, so it's lucky that we're in this situation. As long as we have people with high scores here, we won't be overwhelmed by numbers for a short time, and even if we have few people, we can continue to defend.

And in other words—the opponent will send in those with high scores, and break through with the few elites.

“Sorry, make way for us, second years.”

“Yo, we meet again, Kinoshita—not you. I'm depressed. Looks like it's the older sister...”

As Sakamoto had expected, the Toko-Natsu pair, which had caused us much trouble, has appeared.

“Welcome, we've been waiting for you, sempais.”

"Your treatment to me is so different from Hideyoshi, huh. Are you ready, that mohican-sempai?"

Yuuko and I decide on our opponents, and get ready for battle. Yuuko's facing a mohican upperclassman called Tsunemura, and I'm facing this bald upperclassman called Natsukawa. Now I can avenge my loss.

"That woman from before...you really won't give up huh. Isn't the winner already decided here?"

The bald upperclassman pretentiously sighed once he saw me.

It's true that I was beaten rather badly by this upperclassman, and us second years are all in an overwhelmingly disadvantageous situation, to a point of nearly losing.

But I'm definitely not going to give up.

"Of course I'm not going to give up. I'm from F class after all."

He seems to understand somewhat once I said these words, frowning impatiently,

"Ah...that is the case now that you mention it...argh, it's troublesome...but it's my job as the upperclassman to teach my underclassmen a lesson. I'll be your opponent."

This upperclassman in front of me mutters the word, and the summoned beast appears at his feet.

My summoned beast raises its weapon at the opponent.

“Then, let's settle this through this battle.”

I say this, issuing a challenge,

And the opponent doesn't reply,

“...”

He looks dumbfounded as he stares at the indicated scores.

“What's the matter? If you're not going to attack, I'm going to attack you, you know?”

“!!”

After hearing these words, the bald upperclassman finally recovered, but is still unable to hide his panicked look.

“Hey hey hey, I never heard of this before...someone actually managed to raise the scores to such a high level through the Center Test rules...”

“Really? It's great that you know this before the actual exams.”

3-A, Natsukawa Junpei, Foreign Language (English), 451 points.

Vs

2-F, Shimada Minami, Foreign Language (German), 639 points.

“—The 'foreign languages' here include German too.”

My summoned beast closes in on the opponent with more force in its steps.

I want to make sure that guy remains as how I like him. At the same time, I want to show him my cool side, that I'll work hard till the end, and reunite with him with my head held high.

This is everyone's determination, and also the thanks to those guys I call my friends—my fondness for them.

“Muttsurini-kun, those two that went for the emergency exit are the seniors we're so familiar with, right? Are Minami and Yuuko going to be okay...?”

I control my summoned beast at the entrance of the old school building as I tried to talk with Muttsurini-kun beside me.

“...No need to worry.”

Muttsurini answers with his usual bluntness.

When we first met, we're enemies in the test summoning war, and now we're fighting alongside each other, entrusting our backs to each other. I do find this a little surprising, and inadvertently let out a little chuckle.

"...What's so funny?"

"No, it's nothing."

"...You're weird."

It's really interesting seeing his reaction, and I start to laugh loudly.

"...Concentrate on the battle, Kudou."

"Oh, sorry."

I command my summoned beast to slam the axe it has been swinging. Behind me, Muttsurini-kun's summoned beast swings its dagger around, dicing the enemies quickly.

In terms of health education, nobody can beat the combination of Muttsurini-kun and me. Because of this, Sakamoto-kun left this place to us. In fact, the 3rd years really can't break through from here, and can only watch from afar. If this keeps up, we can definitely seal them there as per our objective.

The problem after that is—

"Greetings, Tsuchiya Kouta-kun."

A female student walks out from the crowd of 3rd year students standing some distance away.

The problem thereafter is this lewd senior.

“I'm here too, Kogure-sempai.”

“Oh? It's rude of me then. I focused too much on Tsuchiya Kouta-kun that I forgot about you.”

She said , and gave Muttsurini-kun a flirtatious glance.

The thing I'm really unhappy about is that this senior actions are all as alluring as ever. Whether it's that voluptuous chest, the wondrous long thighs shown under the skirt, or the expression she uses as she looks here, everything, I think is basically super effective against a boy in puberty. Furthermore, her target is Muttsurini-kun...

“Muttsurini-kun, I'll take this sempai as the opponent. Try your best not to you—”

“This won't do. Everyone, I'll leave this to you.”

On Kogure-sempai's command, two 3rd year girls call out their summoned beasts and attack me. Uu...! I knew this would happen. ..!

Even I can't possibly focus on dealing two enemies at once. My summoned beast's tangled, unable to escape, “Summon” and senior Kogure mutters this, calling out her summoned beast.

“Now then, Tsuchiya Kouta-kun, you will have to be my opponent.”

She says as she crosses her legs, emphasizing the beautiful profiles of her legs. Muttsurini-kun's going to be taken down by this move again...!

“Muttsurini-kun! Hang in there! I'll go save you!”

“...Kudou, focus on your opponent.”

I got told off by Muttsurini-kun, but even if he says so, I can't focus. I'm concerned by the battle over there, and even if that's not the case, Kogure-sempai's face and actions are distracting me.

“You should be focused on your own opponent too, Tsuchiya Kouta-kun—I hope that you simply look at me instead of looking around.”

Once Kogure-sempai said this, she places her hand on her skirt without a single word. She doesn't lift the hem of it immediately though; she starts to adjust the pleat of the skirt.

This senior's really familiar with how to attract other people's attention. She lures people with her words, charm them with her facial expression, and make her opponent anxious.

And then, after stimulating the opponent's expectations and imagination, she raises the skirt to an almost exposed region to torture the opponent—

3-A, Kogure Aoi, Health Education, Unable to battle.

Vs

2-F, Tsuchiya Kouta, Health Education, 764 points.

“”.....Eh.....?””

“...Acceleration, ended.”

Muttsurini-kun mutters.

He wasn't charmed by that alluring figure even I as a girl kept staring at, and beat the opponent using his summoned beast.

“...Don't get lazy, Kudou.”

“Eh? Ah, yes.”

Kogure-sempai and I aren't the only ones stunned here, as the other two girls facing me are also stunned. After Muttsurini-kun prompted me, I quickly attacked and sent those girls to the detention room.

Right beside me, Kogure-sempai shows a shocked expression on her beautiful face.

“Tsuchiya...Kouta-kun...what, exactly...”

"...Don't treat me as a fool, you pervert woman."

Muttsurini-kun declares to a stunned Kogure-sempai.

"...Why do I have to prioritize you over my friends?"

"It's interesting isn't it, Sakamoto-kun?"

We're at the front of the second level stairs in the old school building.

Soon after everyone went to their positions, the enemies we missed started to appear here. For some reason, Kubo looks rather happy as he starts to chat with me, controlling his summoned beast to beat the enemies at the same time.

"Interesting? How?"

"I'm talking about the current situation."

3-C, Yoshida Koutarou, Humanities, Unable to battle

Vs

2-A, Kubo Toshimitsu, Humanities (World History), 224 points.

Kubo deals the final blow to the last invading enemy as he answered.

“What's interesting? The situation is grave for us. Don't tell me you have unique tastes in desperate situation?”

“Hahaha. This isn't what I mean.”

Kubo starts laugh, as if it's really funny. What does he mean actually?

“You planned the strategy for Tsuchiya-kun and Shimada-san to clear the field, Kinoshita-kun to guide, and Yoshii-kun to finish everything. Including the members who changed attire for the sake of isolating Takashiro-sempai, the keys to this war are all F class members. The summoning war itself is normally a battle between scores, and now it ended up like this. Don't you find it interesting?”

Kubo said as he smiled. Ah, that's right. Now that he says so, maybe it has gotten interesting here.

“If you find it interesting, why don't you join F class? You can join us immediately if you submit a blank script for your next exam paper.

After hearing my proposal , “This is an interesting proposal”, Kubo said with a serious look.

“But I think I shall pass. I don't seem suited for it.”

This is how he answered.

'Don't seem suited', does Kubo mean taking it easy in the exams , or fitting in with F class? Leaving aside the former, I don't think he has to be that worried about the latter...

“Oh goodness gracious...you're chatting away like that while we're walking hard here. Isn't that unfair?”

“Yeah. Don't you know how much of a difficult battle we had to face?”

While I'm chatting with Kubo, Shimada and Hideyoshi walks over to us. Shimada's probably reporting to Hideyoshi that she completed the objective and met up with him. Speaking of which, those sent in by Hideyoshi will probably begin attacking Takashiro in another 5 minutes.

“Don't say that okay. Kubo never let a single invader through, and I've been opening fields everywhere.”

“I know. Just saying.”

Since I knew there would be a few enemies appearing to fight Kubo, I deployed the field 3 times using my bracelet. When I deployed it just now, I got mathematics and language, and this time, I got the humanities field I need now. I finally managed to fulfill my basic requirement here.

“I abandoned the field as you said, Sakamoto-kun, and gathered the remaining forces on the stairs.”

"They probably will be able to hang on a little longer, but it's just a matter of time before the enemy attacks the representative."

"...(Nods)."

Due to the massive numbers, Muttsurini's team had to deplete lots of points, and they came back as well. They're set to remain on standby and defend Shouko.

"...It's about time for us to step up, Yuuji."

"Yeah. Looks like it's time for you to join the fight."

Shouko, who has been on standby to protect herself, arrives on the corridor. Right now, the points she has is our important fighting strength. We need to lure the enemy deep into the old school building for this operation, so we need her to appear in front of the enemy as bait and protect herself somewhat.

"I don't like this, but right now, we can only act as shields to hold them off."

"It can't be helped. We just fought against so many enemies."

Kudou and Kinoshita, who used up a lot of points in the battle before this, can only lament at this.

It's really a rare sight to see these two A class members, the top ranking ones at that, grumble that they don't have enough points.

"I say, Kubo."

“Hm? What is it?”

“You just said that the situation's interesting. In that case, this situation is the most interesting.”

I said as I look around at everyone's face.

There's someone with outstanding grades aiming for college.

An expert in health education and an expert in drama that hopes to improve on his art.

A girl who just returned to Japan and learnt Japanese in a single year.

Everyone has their own talents, and strong wills that won't lose to anyone else.

“Just think. We have so many outstanding talents, but didn't we entrust everything on the bastards in this worst class? If this isn't a joke, what is it?”

And the opponent is also the valedictorian amongst our upperclassmen. One can't imagine this being something a normal person would do.

“Haha. That's really the case.”

“I-I just had to help because there's no other choice...”

“Ahaha, but I'm rather interested in seeing Yoshii-kun looking so stupid.”

“...If it's Yoshii, he'll definitely succeed.”

Everyone in A class expressed their own thoughts.

“Speaking of which, Sakamoto-kun, is it really alright that you let Yoshii-kun handle the best part?”

“Ah, yeah...”

To be honest, if nothing else happens, I really want to beat that bastard up. I do have my own grudges and hatred on that guy.

But right now, I don't want to fight against him personally.

This isn't because the tactic isn't feasible, or the difference in scores and skill level, or whether there's any other way to get about doing this. I just lent that guy a favor.

“To quote what a certain idiot said—I'm not the protagonist today, that's all.”

What he owes me is that he has to settle the score with an important thing to him on the line.

“Heh...so you finally understand who's more suited to be the hero between us, Yuuji.”

At that moment, while all of us are gathered here, a certain idiot's senseless voice can be heard.

“Shut up. What I just said only applies for today.”

I snorted at what that guy just said.

Seriously. He was being so useless just a while ago, and now he says he want to be a hero.

“Kept you waiting, Yuuji. Are you ready?”

“You're too slow, Akihisa. Who do you think you're talking to.”

Now then, since you're the cause of it all, it's your turn to settle everything.

The Nineteenth Question

Please answer the following question.

The Kan'i Jūnikai[11] was introduced in the year AD ( )[12]

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

The Kan'i Jūnikai was introduced in the year AD '603'.

Teacher's comment:

Correct answer.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

The Kan'i Jūnikai was introduced in the year AD '603'.

Teacher's comment:

I no longer mark you answers as wrong instinctively once I see your name. I do feel delighted at seeing your maturation.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:

The Kan'i Jūnikai was introduced in the year AD 'The Kan'i Jūnikai was introduced'.

Teacher's comment:

I instinctively marked you as incorrect once I saw your name, and since the result was as I had expected, I would not be apologizing for this.

AKIHISA YOSHII

“...Good job.”

“You kept us waiting, Yoshii-kun.”

“How's the test results?”

Once I finish the Japanese history replenishment tests, Kirishima-san, Kubo-kun and the rest welcome me back kindly.

Muttsurini and Hideyoshi however give me that 'you finally came back' look like usual.

I wasn't told the details of this operation, but I can more or less guess what it is after seeing everyone. The situation's so dire, yet everyone lasted till now for the sake of our victory. They did everything they are supposed to do, opening a path for this battle.

They're really trustworthy, precious allies.

I really wanted to convey my emotions to them immediately, to thank them for supporting me, for not giving up on me—I'll leave that aside for now though.

The battle's still not over...and also, not all of us are here.

“What's next will be the final battle. Everyone's to go to the first level to lure the enemy. Once you're ready, Akihisa, go to the stairs leading to the roof. I'll make a move first.”

Yuuji calmly instructed me, and turned away, heading to the staircase.

“Do your best, Yoshii-kun.”

“Please don't make that stupid mistake you made just now, Yoshii-kun.”

“I have nothing to say to you. Please fight on till the end.”

Kudou-san, Kinoshita-san and Kubo-kun gave me words of encourage, and went downstairs.

“...Yoshii, don't leave with any regrets.”

“Well, you should be alright.”

“...We'll leave it to you.”

And then, Kirishima-san, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini too walks down the stairs.

“Aki.”

Minami walks to me, calling my name.

And then, she continued to stare at my face, before nodding in a satisfied manner, saying,

“Hm, that's a wonderful expression.”

Like usual, her voice makes me feel energized.

After hearing these words, I had to say these words I intended to say when everyone's gathered,

“—thanks, Minami. I feel a lot better because of you.”

I can't thank Minami enough. This firm-willed, cute, and kind girl really saved me to an extent I don't know of.

Maybe I should apologize to Minami for the diary and that strange confession just now. I just feel really guilty.

It's a little disrespectful to her, but I'm also glad. I'm glad that such a charming girl said that she likes me, and that she encouraged me. I'm really glad.

That's why—

“Thanks, Minami.”

“Don't mind, Aki.”

I really want to convey the feelings in my heart to her, to this charming girl who's filled with kindness no matter what.

“Speaking of which...you aren't going to say something like 'I haven't thought of an answer yet' with that expression, right?”

Minami asks me teasingly.

And to answer her question, I answer her jokingly,

“Don't worry. Even I won't do such a despicable thing.”

“Is that so. That's great.”

The answer came out. I probably would avoid thinking about it if it was me alone, but with Minami supporting me, I'm able to get the answer.

“Then, we just have to settle this.”

Minami stares at my eyes as she said this.

And in response, I give her this one and only response,

“I'll definitely win.”

It's really ridiculous to say that I'll definitely win, let alone since it's coming from this stupid mouth of mine. It's really hard to believe.

However, Minami shows the brightest smile she has ever given, and says,

“...Right, I trust in you. The guy I like is a little stupid—but always cool until the very end.”

Minami turns back as she sways her ponytail, and walks down the stairs.

I watch her leave from behind, and walk upstairs.

Let's go. I hope that I can live up to be that person Minami likes.

"You ready, Akihisa?"

Yuuji was waiting on the 4th level, and greeted me once he saw me.

"About there. I have the strength of a hundred people now."

"Even if there's a hundred of you, it's not going to be much."

Yuuji mocked me. Why's this guy so rude?

"Then, what's the plan after that?"

"Simple. Once the enemies below are baited by Shouko and the rest, we'll run from the old school building roof to the new school building roof *in our own way*, and we'll just beat Takashiro. That's all."

"That's really easy to understand."

"Goes well with an idiot like you."

He's still very rude, but I got to thank him for making it sound simple to me. I just used up a lot of brains cells after all.

"Speaking of which, why's Takashiro-sempai at the roof?"

Since I'm bored, I just randomly asked.

“If he's going to defend against the enemy's sneak attacks, it's common to choose the roof, where the view is wide, compared to the classrooms where there are so many hiding spots.”

I only managed to understand his answer somewhat. Well, I guess there's no need to understand the reasoning behind this.

“”...””

Yuuji and I stand at the metal door leading to the roof, waiting for the time to strike.

“Speaking of which”, at this moment, Yuuji started a topic,

“Akihisa, let me tell you about Takashiro's weaknesses. These weaknesses are something only I can tell.”

“Heh...what's that?”

After hearing my response, Yuuji tells me in a mysterious manner,

“Alright, I'll only tell you one.”

“Just one?”

“—that guy's most likely a virgin.”

This reply really doesn't suit the moment, and is completely beyond my expectations. It's funny because what Yuuji said is so

different from the serious expression he wore, and I can't help but laugh out loud.

"...Ha...Hahaha!! That's really some weakness! He's so handsome, and looks like he does play around with girls too!"

"He may look like a casanova, but think about it. He set so many traps and ploys just to convince a girl. This isn't something someone used to toying with girls will do."

I see, that's really the case. That upperclassman has the looks and such outstanding grades, but he's completely different from how he looks.

"If we're going to think about this, he's probably like you Yuuji, thinking about all sorts of ways to confess."

"I'll kill you."

Killing intent surges from all over Yuuji's body. I better not use this to taunt him in the future.

"Goodness...since you say it now, I'm going to ask you this. If there's a girl you like, how will you tell her?"

Yuuji asks me with those vengeful eyes,

Me...? If it's me—

"I'll confess to her directly."

I'll convey all my feelings to her honestly.

No tricks, just straight to the point.

“I guess so. This method really suits you.”

“Humph. You're going to say, because you're an idiot, right?”

“Hahaha. Your methods are completely different from Takashiro's.”

Yuuji and I laugh out heartily.

And then,

“What kind of expression will that guy give...once he finds out that this plan he worked so hard to come up and prepare is wrecked by a simple idiot right before it actually succeeds?”

Yuuji's lips curl into a smile.

I too start to imagine.

Once I think about how that self-conceited upperclassman will react, I too break into a smile.

“— Don't stop...! ...Give chase!”

“Seal the corridor—”

“—It's over—!”

The ruckus from downstairs reaches our eyes.

It's time.

“Now, let's go.”

“Right.”

We turn around, facing the door leading to the roof, getting ready to run.

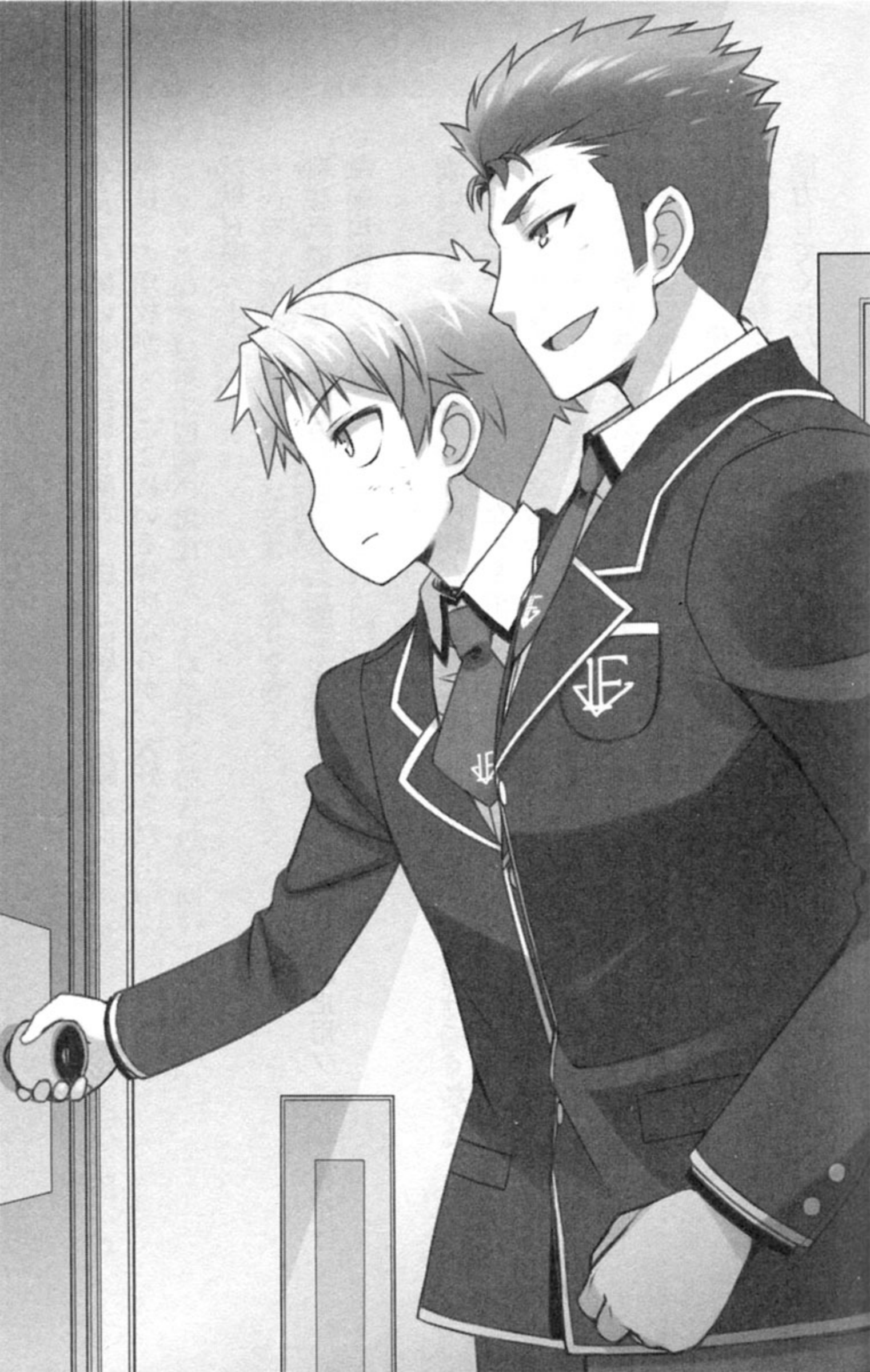
Right when I place my hand on the door, Yuuji says these words,

“Hey, Akihisa.”

“What, Yuuji?”

“Our school sure is interesting.”

This line alone reminds me of all sorts of happenings after entering this school.



I met a bunch of strange guys, and we started off rocky.

There's a girl who just returned to Japan, bad at Japanese, and unable to get along with everyone else.

There's a girl who had the ability, but was sorted to the worst class just because she fainted in the exam.

These people in the same class are all aiming for the same objective, and we have formed this bond after much joys and hardships.

“That's right—”

I turn the doorknob.

“—It's the best!”

I slammed the door open, and we run to the roof.

I love it. This school...and everyone here!

“Summon!”

The summoned beast appears according to my call, and I command it to towards the fence preventing any falls surrounding the roof.

There are a lot of things we're unhappy about, that we argue over, but when we truly meet troubles, everyone's willing to help out.

Right now, it's the same. Everyone believes in me, helping this worthless me, pushing me forward.

My summoned beast swings the fist and slams the fence hard.

Because of this, I have to find an answer I definitely won't regret.

Not for anyone else's sake, but for myself.

So that I'm able to face those who helped me with my head held high.

The fence falls over with a thud after it took the attack from the summoned beast.

During the replenishment tests, my mind was filled with a memory that had yet to fade away.

The scene before we first met.

When she was alone in the empty classroom, practicing how to draw with such devotion.

She continued to draw what's not considered a good drawing for a thanksgiving, with such single-mindedness.

We jump past the collapsed fence, and hop onto the ceiling of the corridor in front of us.

I admire the sight of her practicing with such serious.

I was attracted to her heart that kept working on just to convey her emotions.

I was angry that her hard work never paid off.

We simply continue to run forward without looking down, running along the top of the 4th floor's ceiling.

Right now, I'm forced to choose whether to turn all the efforts she worked so hard to get into nothing.

Do I want to say that I want her to stay in this school with me?

Or do I smile and watch her leave for her own future?

Which side should I choose? I wondered with all my might.

My summoned beast swings a fist again, breaking the fence on the new school building.

I have some feelings I want to convey to that single-minded girl.

I have some feelings I want to convey to that girl kinder than anyone else.

I also want to convey the thoughts I have.

Yuuji and I arrive at the roof of the new school building.

"—! Where did you two...!?"

Takashiro-sempai got into position once he saw us appear from an unbelievable position.

But I ignore this upperclassman as I snatched the audio speakers located on the roof.

I shall convey this answer I got.

To those allies who helped me.

To Minami, who made sure I'm no longer in doubt.

And also—to the person I like.

After checking that the power is plugged in, I press the switch with the broadcast label indicated on it.

Once I touched the volume knob, I turned it to the maximum level.

And then, I slammed the button with the 'begin broadcast' button on it, and pulled the mic attached to it.

A sharp screech can be heard from the speaker.

I thought about this a lot.

I'm very stupid, I don't have a good brain, and I'm not good at thinking, but I thought of this with all my might.

I guess this is the only time in my life I actually thought about things so much.

And after that, I got this conclusion. I can't possibly...leave any regrets behind!!!

I hold tightly onto the mic, and convey all my thoughts into my words.

“HIMEJI-SAN! I LIKE YOU!”

I'm just an idiot, but I don't think that I'm skilled enough to lie to my own feelings. If my words cause Himeji-san to stay here, and causes her path in life to be narrowed, I'll work harder, and harder to open her path in life again! No matter how heavy the price is, I want to be with her!

That's why—

“I'm going beat this trash of a virgin and hear your answer later!”

I'm going to get a decisive win out of this battle and settle everything.

A howling screech can be heard from the speaker, and the emergency broadcast was ended.

I stare at Takashiro-sempai head on, and issue him the challenge to this final battle.

“Let's begin then, pretty boy.”

“Yoshii...Akihisaaaa....!”

Takashiro-sempai glares at me furiously.

Bring it on. This—is the end of our summoning war!

The Twentieth Question

Please read the following passage and answer the question.[13]

"Where did Sadakichi go?"

Jihei asks, and Tasuke shrugs as he answers,

"To Okiku. He wants to express his 10 years of love to her with his self-proclaimed specialty of Poetry[14]."

After hearing Tasuke's words, Jihei cannot help but frown,

"He wants to touch her heart by singing a love poem? I can already guess the *outcome*."

"Yeah. Blame that guy for being '____' despite being so bad at it '.

Question 1: Please fill in the common saying in the blank with the correct answer and explain its meaning.

Question 2: What is the 'outcome' highlighted in the text? Please write down the outcome Jihei and Tasuke's expects.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

1: <Single-minded> despite being so bad at it

Meaning: It means that he will work hard for something no matter how stupid it may look

2: Sadakichi may be bad at singing, but Jihei and Tasuke expect that he will get Okiku's heart after seeing him work so hard to sing .

Teacher's Comment:

The correct answer here is 'overestimated himself', but your belief might not be wrong here.

Himeji Mizuki's Answer:

1: <SIngle-minded> despite being so bad at it

Meaning: It means that even if he's not good at at something, he continues to give his all for that cause.

2: Even if he's singing the poem poorly, Sadakichi's thoughts will definitely reach Okiku.

Teacher's Comment:

It is a teacher's sorrow to have to mark a cross here.

"—Summon." Takashiro-sempai calls out his summoned beast.

The samurai summoned beast that caused much trouble just now appears.

3-A, Takashiro Masaharu, Humanities (Geography), 375 points

Vs

2-F, Yoshii Akihisa, Humanities (Japanese History), 321 points

The subject we're competing in is humanities. Though there's still some difference in the score, it's still within my ability to take it on.

“Akihisa, finish him off with a quick attack!”

“Right. Got it.”

I answer, and let my summoned beast sprint.

There's a time limit to this battle.

We can only maintain this 1-on-1 battle for a short time. Once the enemy realizes our actions and help Takashiro-sempai, it'll be all over. I have to settle this battle during the short time before reinforcement arrives.

“Seriously...how annoying are you...!?”

My summoned beast swings its wooden sword down while charging forward, and the enemy raises the sword to block it. My summoned beast then gives up on pursing as it takes a step back, while the enemy quickly pursues me by taking a step forward.

“Why is it that you are still able to say such ridiculous words even at this moment? If you are really thinking about this for her own sake, you should back down!”

The sharp blade stabs forward, aiming right at my center, and I use the wooden sword to block the tip, tiptoeing aside to dodge.

“Have you forgotten how you answered the question I asked?”

“Yoshii Akihisa-kun. When a person with ability, but is unfairly treated, tries to get back the position he deserves, will you step in to interfere?”

How can I forget? At that time, I answered 'no'. Right now, this thought still hasn't changed. It's because of this that I was so troubled, that I kept thinking.

But—more importantly than what we think, there's something more important we should be considering first.

“I won't let Himeji-san do this if she doesn't want to go overseas .”

I continue to parry the quick sword stabs as I dodge.

And then, I attack back, only to be blocked.

"What nonsense are you saying...? She cannot possibly hope for such a thing...! The worst, 4th rate facilities is not worth comparing to the best treatment overseas!"

I thought this way too. There's a vast difference in studying environment between these two.

But these are what Takashiro-sempai and I think. It's different from hers.

"Himeji-san said that she doesn't like to say farewell, and she said that she wants to be here. In that case, I rather she stay here than go overseas to study."

"That is just a lie said to you because she wants to console you... or sympathy. Why do you not understand!?"

At first, I was skeptical too, that Himeji-san said something different from what she really thought so that she wouldn't hurt me, because she's so kind.

But this line did come from a girl who summoned her courage to confess to me. If she doesn't like me sincerely, she couldn't possibly confess. This can't be sympathy then.

In that case, I—

"How can I doubt her!? I believe in Himeji-san's words!"

She said that she likes F class, and that's why she's able to work hard.

She said that she likes me , and that's why she wants to stay here.

I'm no longer doubtful about these words. I believe in these words, and I'll give my all to fulfill her wishes and my thoughts!

"...Tch! I am really talking to a wall here...!"

Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast leapt backwards to pull the distance. It seems that he has given up on beating me personally and has chosen to wait for reinforcements, which will definitely assure his victory.

"Don't you run away!"

My summon beast gives pursuit at full speed.

I stab my wooden sword, swing down, swing horizontally with all my strength, but the enemy's summoned beast continues to persist in defending itself, so I'm unable to hit him.

Using the chance presented when my summoned beast missed its attack, the enemy immediately leaps away to pull some distance between us.

My summoned beast gets into a lunging position to close the distance, and charges forward to attack.

The enemy focuses its strength in its feet, wanting to use the same method to dodge.

“You will not be able to hit me, Yoshii Akihisa-kun.”

The enemy mocked me.

Won't be able to hit him? How's that possible? I still have... something!

“—Double!”

“Wha...!?”

Takashiro-sempai widens his eyes in shock once he saw me activate my platinum bracelet.

The last time I lost to Takashiro-sempai, it was because the summoned beast couldn't move because of the bracelet's malfunction, resulting in a slight delay. It's an extremely short time , just that short moment as compared to the entire battle.

This method probably is something those who only think of the future, who only think of the smart decisions, can't possibly come up with.

But I'm going to give my all in this instant!

“Tch...hh...!!”

The enemy was blocked by the second summoned beast, and gave up on escaping.

Having deduced that it can't possibly defend against attacks from two summoned beast, the enemy throws its sword away and does a karate chop. It looks like he wants to use that move he used to stop me just now.

I recall the pain and agony my body suffered back then.

“I am going to let you roll about in agony!”

The enemy stabs a hand blade—a karate chop. Pain and agony close in on me. My summoned beast couldn't dodge it.

But I don't feel fear in my heart.

My summoned beast continues to charge forward in the face of this pain approaching me.

I got help from a lot of people.

Everyone in the class, Kirishima-san, Kubo-kun, Kinoshita-san, Kudou-san,

Those guys from my gang, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini, and I'll just add a Yuuji.

And also...Minami.

It's because I got everyone's help that this battle is made a reality.

“...If I say that there's just one moment in my life I can't lose...”

The enemy's chop stabs into the abdomen of my summoned beast, and a sharp pain races through my nerves.

I grit my teeth to push this pain aside.

Right. If I say that there's a moment I definitely mustn't lose in my life,

“Now's the time—!”

I endure the pain in my abdomen as I let the summoned beast step forward.

In front of me is Takashiro-sempai's summoned beast, unable to move because of that outstretched hand.

The enemy has no way of dodging my attack now.

“Damn...”

Takashiro-sempai murmurs as he watches the lunging wooden sword, and yells with all his might.

“DAMN IIIIITTTTT—!!!”

“GOOO DIIIEEEEE—!!!”

The wooden sword stabbed through the enemy's throat.

I then slam the enemy to the ground, not giving it any strength to jump or dodge.

The enemy's summoned beast falls flat, remaining still as it looks up.

And then, it disappears silently.

“...Im...possible...”

Takashiro-sempai collapsed on the floor.

I turn to that familiar bad friend of mine, I see him raise his chin at the audio equipment.

I follow his instruction, approach the audio equipment, and switch on the power.

Once I check that there's noise in the speakers, I take a deep breath, and hold the mic tightly.

“WE WON...THIS WAR!!!”

“““ALRIGHT!!!!!”””

I can hear the cheers of victory from downstairs.

The battle between the 2nd and 3rd years draws to a close.

“Phew.”

I switch off the power to the speakers, heave a little sigh to relax myself since I'm feeling tense.

And then,

“Akihisa-kun!”

The exit door was pushed aside, and someone runs up to the roof.

Fresh snowy white skin, with a light tint of red.

Long, soft silky hair reaching her back, dazzling under the sun.

Her eyes look as if they can absorb me in as she stares at my eyes head on.

“Himeji-san...?”

The girl I had fallen for before we formally met was already standing there, panting.

“Aren't you supposed to be in the detention room—”

I subconsciously mentioned the first thing that entered my mind.

“What're you saying? I'm the one who really likes you, Akihisa-kun?”

And then, she shows the best smile ever on that face that was more beautiful than the time when we first met.

“How can I possibly sit still when you said such words?”

She leaps at me happily while I'm looking surprised.

...Ah, that's right.

Me hating that her hard work wouldn't be rewarded was just my secondary reason.

My motivation was actually much simpler—from the first time I met this girl, I just wanted to see her smiling face.

The Final Question

Please write the correct number in the following blank:

"Year ( ): The Taika Reforms"

Sakamoto Yuuji's Answer:

"645"

Teacher's Comment

Correct.

Yoshii Akihisa's Answer:

"645"

Teacher's Comment

Well done there.

YUUJI & AKIHISA

Hi-fives

Yuuji, Hideyoshi, Muttsurini and I exchange high-fives with each other.

“I'm back.”

“You guys really did it.”

“...good job.”

“You guys too.”

Right now, it's after the summoning war.

The principal wants to announce something, so we're all gathered in the courtyard.

“Good work, Aki.”

Minami welcomes me with a gentle smile.

“Yes. Thanks every—”

I raise my hand to answer that smile,

“Yoshii, you bastard! You really did it!”

“Aren't you now the MVP?”

“Thank us properly!”

Sugawa-kun, Fukumura-kun and the rest pat me on my shoulders and the back of my head from behind.

These guys too fought alongside us till the end, our F class allies
.

Really, we gave everything we had until the very end.

And the proof is—

“Go die, you scumbag...!”

“Hogging all the benefits to yourself...!”

“You're supposed to be an idiot bastard. Unforgivable...!”

Right now, they're kicking and punching me with all they have.

“Wow, we actually won like that. You guys are really amazing there, Yoshii-kun and everyone else.”

“We really can't match up to them.”

“...He's the husband I'm so proud of.”

“Erm, prez, Kubo-kun, those guys we can't beat and the husband you're proud of will continue to start summoning wars against us class A, you know?”

To put it nicely, I'm taking the violent praises from everyone. Right now, I'm being kicked madly by everyone present after I took a sweeping kick. Isn't this just bullying right now?

“What are you guys doing!?”

“““ARGH! IRONMAN!!!”””

After Ironman roared, those guys kicking me scattered like birds.

“Uu...that's too much...”

I stand up and pat the dust off.

“...”

Ironman stares at me intently. Well, I guess I have to thank him for saving me.

“Thanks for helping me there, Ironmaaa!?”

“Haha, Akihisa, why did you get beaten by Ironmaaa!?”

“...Humph.”

Ironman slammed his giant fist on both Yuuji and my head, and then walks away slowly. Wh-What's going on...?

“That bastard Ironman! It's alright if he just beat Akihisa. Why did he beat me too...!”

“Seriously. Can't he just beat Yuuji up...?”

Both of us rub the place where we just got punched with tears in our eyes.

Kirishima-san and the rest watch us from the side as they chat away.

"...Why did Yuuji and Yoshii get beaten?"

"Um...Nishimura-sensei must be having mixed feelings right now, I guess?"

"What do you mean by mixed feelings, Kubo-kun?"

"As a teacher, he can't leave them alone after they did something dangerous. He knew however that they had a belief they had to follow through with, and chose to beat them instead of lecturing them, maybe?"

"Ahaha. I see~"

"A teacher really has to deal with all sorts of troubling things, huh?"

Since he's a teacher, I thought that there're other ways of punishing us besides corporal punishment!

"But that was really a ridiculous way of breaking through."

"Seriously. I can't believe that Aki and Sakamoto ran on such a dangerous place."

Hideyoshi and Minami recall our actions running on the roof as they said,

“But there's no other choice right? We don't have any other road .”

“But either way, well...”

“You destroyed the fence and run on the roof 4 levels high. If any bystander sees it, it'll cause a major problem.”

“Also, you even used the microphone to confess your love so loudly to the entire area. Maybe you might get a harsh punishment this time, Yoshii-kun, Sakamoto-kun.”

Leaving aside Minami, even Kinoshita-san and Kubo-kun has said so. I recall everything I did just now.

Hmm...I was a little hot in the head, but I think I went a little overboard there...?

“...Another suspension?”

“That's troublesome, both for Aki and Sakamoto.”

“...Nothing to do with me.”

“I never knew about the full extent of the operation at first.”

Those guys we were working together with a while back now choose to protect themselves.

But I did all these with such readiness. As for whatever punishment that comes, I'll just accept it.

“‘This guy wanted to—!!’”

“Looks like neither of you want to accept responsibility.”

Just accept your punishment, Yuuji.

“A-Akihisa-kun, I do have some involvement in this, so it's about being punished, we can both...”

“No, Himeji-san, I'm grateful for your kindness, but that's probably impossible...

“Himeji was in the detention room all this while. She has nothing to with all the mess Akihisa came up with himself.”

“Wait, Yuuji, don't think of pushing all the blame on me.”

And also, this guy was the one who came up with the plan. I'm just following orders here, so if we're talking about responsibility —

“Akihisa!”

I feel a thud on my back. This voice probably belongs to Linne-kun, right?

“You were so cool just now! I was really touched at the end!”

“I-Is that so?”

“That's enough already, brat. No matter how cool you think Akihisa is, don't go about telling everyone that he's the one who came up with the plan itself.”

“I say, Yuuji, why're you pushing all the blame on me?”

No matter how we try to distort the evidence, Yuuji's the sole culprit behind this entire thing.

“So cool. I think I've fallen for you, Akihisa!”

“Ah, yes. Thanks about that...I guess?”

Why? I just feel that there's a chill on my back when he said that .

“But Akihisa, a hero isn't just for a certain person! A hero belongs to everyone, you know?”

“Ahaha, I'm not a hero.”

“No! You're a hero!”

Hmm...this isn't something really big...

I show a grimace on my face, and Linne-kun continues,

“That's why I did my best so that you can continue being a hero, Akihisa!”

“No, actually, Linne-kun, I'm not a her...hm?”

Did his best? For what?

"I'll look forward to it then, Linne-kun!"

Linne-kun then disappears like the wind, just like how he appeared.

"What did he mean back then?"

"Who knows? That brat can't possibly come up with anything decent, right?"

While we're chatting away,

"The principal wishes to say something from now on. Everyone, please be silent."

Takahashi-sensei's voice can be heard from the speakers. Oh goodness, we're now going to end everything after this gathering?

Anyway, I turn my face forward, and I see the principal pick up the microphone from the podium on the stage.

"Ah— all of you have done your best, both the 2nd and 3rd years. I shall praise you for that."

The principal starts to speak with her usual lazy tone.

"As everyone knows, this test summoning system is an education system only our school has, a symbol that allows our school to gain attention from both domestic and foreign areas. Many students worked very hard to in this war between school

year with the help of this system, and the entire process was really exciting."

I think it's probably because besides the entire school body, the inspector Linne-kun is also here, right? The principal's tone hasn't change, but at least she praised us.

"I too learned lots of things from you students in this summoning war, whether it is about the mistakes in this school's directions, or about the things important to you students."

The principal's words fill my heart.

I too thought about lots of things this time, and also learned from them. I suppose this is what they call valuable experience.

"I shall bear responsibility for these mistakes. I do wish that you simply focus on your studies and mature...that is all."

Once the principal finished her words, she got down from the stage.

"Thank you very much, principal."

The voice of Takahashi-sensei, the emcee, can be heard.

From now on, Fumitzuki Gakuen will have some change, from a direction that focuses on studies.

I guess the principal saw from us in this summoning war what are the truly important things, and also what we did for those causes.

"Akihisa-kun."

Himeji-san, standing beside me, whispers to me softly.

"What is it, Himeji-san?"

I too whisper back to her

"This school—is really amazing, right?"

Yuuji too asked the same question before my battle against Takashiro-sempai.

In this case, I think Minami, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini will ask me the same thing.

A lot of things happened ever since we enrolled in this school.

I met a lot of people, made some bonds, and we deepened them.

We went through enjoyable times, sad times, unbearable times, happy times, all sorts of experiences.

And right now, we got such a new experience, and new bonds.

That's why to me, no matter how many times I'm asked this, the answer is always the same.

“Right—it's the best.”

We will still gather in this school before we graduate.

All sorts of things will definitely happen in the future, right?

At that time, we will be troubled, think about them, and change with them.

Along with this school, as the principal said.

Along with this hardworking girl standing beside me, who formed a new relationship with me.

A notification in the change of school rules

Fumitzuki Gakuen, Article 12, Section 5.

Love between students shall be forbidden.

The above rule shall be added as a new rule to the original rules

Fumitzuki Gakuen Principal Todou Kaoru

Himeji-san and I ended up back to being normal friends.

Supplementary Examination

Question: Please fill in the correct year.[15]

In the year ( ), Christianity was first introduced in Japan.

Kirishima Shouko's Answer:

"Yuuji confessed his love to me in the year 1549."

תיבה

Teacher's Comment:

The number is correct, but the event is wrong.

Himeji Mizuki's Answer:

"Akihisa-kun confessed to me in the year 2022"

Teacher's Comment:

This teacher here is still waiting for the old Himeji-san to come back.

“”Tell us what's that all about!!””

“...That...!”

Once we saw the new school rule that was introduced, we stormed to the principal's office to roar out.

“So you damned brats finally came in?”

Once she saw me, the principal merely snorts in a bored manner ,

“Old hag! That's what you mean by 'changing the school and correcting the mistakes'!? You ugly old witch!!”

“Yeah, I was mistaken after all. You have to be educated with more strictness, so I had to change the school rules.”

The principal doesn't look sorry at all. T-This damned old granny...!

“That's too much, principal!! That rule's too much!”

“...Please retract that school rule.”

“Since the second year valedictorian and salutatorian have asked me this, it's really hard for me to refuse here.”

““Then—!””

“Alright, just keep quiet already, you brats.”

“And you said it's hard to reject us?”

“...You're not giving us any face...!”

This is the case even with the outstanding students Himeji-san and Kirishima-san requesting us.

What'll happen if it's me?

“Erm, old granny.”

“Die.”

“You won't even listen to what I say!?”

Her tone's even different from before! What's with this damned old granny!?

“Well, Akihisa, Himeji, Shouko, calm down and listen to what the old hag as to say.”

Yuuji, who came to the principal's office with us, said so.

On a side note, Minami, Hideyoshi, Muttsurini, Kudou-san, Kinoshita-san and Kubo-kun are all here with us. Us friends have to be together at all costs, that's why! (We're definitely not thinking of something trashy like trying to force the principal to accept our idea with numbers.)

“What I want to say? Well, it's fine, guess it's good for you to hear me out...no, even if you don't want to hear, I have to say this to get this out of my mind.”

The principal spoke with a growl in response to Yuuji's words. Huh? Did something happen?

“YOU DAMNED BRATS!!!”

She loud, sharp roar echoes in the principal's office.

“You actually did such a bad thing in such a noticeable place, and with the sponsor's inspector watching too!!”

Her expression has changed, and she looks really angry here. What?

“That bad thing?

"You destroyed a school facility, did such a dangerous thing, and even made a broadcast in the entire school!"

erm...I destroyed the fence, ran on the roof of the 4th level corridor, and confessed using the speakers at maximum volume... is that right?

"Erm, so what about that?"

"What do you mean 'what about that'!? The test summoning system's just there to give you motivation to study, and look what you did!? You did such a dangerous thing, and did that kind of a crazy love affair! Do you want to get the sponsors and the public to start sending in complaints!?"

"..."

Now that she said this, it really does seem that we went overboard there.

"It's true that to the public and the sponsors, these things aren't much besides complaint material."

"It does seem that it's used to do other things besides studying."

"...No matter how we improve our grades, it has nothing to do with them."

Hideyoshi, Minami and Muttsurini nods as bystanders.
We-Well, I think I do have the same view as the three of them.

While I'm remaining silent, Kudou-san asks beside us,

"Then principal, what's that school rule for?"

"That? That's some *earnest advice* that inspector brat gave me. I can't hide something that has happened, and we have to quickly deal with this matter strictly to get some appeal. If I do that, he'll be able to write a positive report for us, that."

The words Linne-kun said to me after the summoning war appears in my mind. *"But Akihisa, a hero isn't just for a certain person ! A hero belongs to everyone, you know?" "That's why I did my best so that you can continue being a hero, Akihisa!"*

"S-So that's how it is...?"

That damned Linne-kun...! I thought he's a cute kouhai that admires me, but this act is really unforgivable even for me...!

"Hm, in such a situation, what the principal did in response does seem right."

"Yeah. Once the problem is found out, she dealt with it immediately, especially since it's such a major thing. It's hard for her to be told off."

Kubo-kun and Yuuji calmly analyzed this. Uu...! I've nothing to argue against that...!

"Sorry to change the topic, principal. Though we do know the reason, won't this end up causing more troubles...?"

“Th-That's right! Everyone will definitely oppose! There'll be a ruckus in this school!”

“...It'll be dangerous if there's violence! Please take it back...!”

Kinoshita-san asks politely, while Himeji-san and Kirishima-san continues on from her words as they leaned forward.

And then, Minami places her hand on Himeji-san's shoulder.

“That won't do, Mizuki. We can't trouble the principal.”

Minami spokes in a strangely calm tone as compared to Himeji-san and Kirishima-san. Huh...?

“B-But, Minami-chan! It's too much to have a school rule that forbids love!”

“I do think this way too, but Mizuki, we can't possibly argue since we're the cause of it all. So—”

“S-so...?”

“Since you can't get together with Aki, just endure until graduation then♪. There's no choice since it's against the school rules.”

Minami shows a very impish grin. Why's that smile so evil looking? It's so different from that face she showed before my battle against Takashiro-sempai!

“M-Minami-chan, are you planning to wait till graduation and snatch Akihisa-kun during this time...?”

“No no, I do think that instead of being with a quiet person like you, Mizuki, I think a cheerful energetic girl like me is more suited to be with Aki!”

“Hm, I do say that I agree with that.”

“Th-That's not true! Akihisa-kun goes better with a girl like me that takes things more calmly!”

“Also, it's more disadvantageous for me if you go out with Aki, Mizuki. There's a need for overtime to make up for this difference.”

Yes yes Minami nods.

“So Aki, you better get ready. I'm serious after this too!"

“Minami-chan! You can't do that! Akihisa-kun's min—”

“Oh, Mizuki, it'll be against the rules if you continue on, you know? You have to obey the rules as a student.”

“Uu...!”

And then, Yuuji too nods his head,

“Yeah, it's like what Shimada said. Since we're students, we have to obey the rules. Also, we did cause such troubles in the first place. Got to take responsibility here.”

He probably agrees with Minami too. Th-This bastard.

“...Yuuji, I can't agree with your plan.”

“Hahaha, but it's against the rules, you know? No no no, I'm definitely not backing out because you're binding me too tightly. This is something the ones who started this have to take.”

“...No can do. I already came up with a plan to give birth to babies.”

“WE CAN'T DO THIS WHETHER THERE'S A NEW SCHOOL RULE OR NOT, YOU KNOW!?”

Why's this topic getting out of hand? This is bad...!

“Ku-Kubo-kun! What do you think?”

“I agree with the principal's actions wholeheartedly.”

“Kubo-kun!?”

That's weird!? Isn't Kubo-kun my ally here!?

The principal watches us yap away, and says,

“Speaking of which, I do want you guys to thank me.”

“Huh? Why?”

"Without this love forbidden rule, you and Sakamoto will be dealt quite the harsh treatment by your class, no?

I don't know, when did the principal know about the famous culture of our F class?

...Leaving aside that.

"Old hag, you're too naive."

"Yeah, that's completely true. You don't know anything at all."

Good grief Yuuji and I shrug our shoulders.

As expected, this principal's the all-knowing principal after all.

"Hear this out, old hag."

"Those guys in our F class—"

"YOSHII!! SAKAMOTO!! GET OUT HERE!!!"

"NOW'S THE TIME FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY THE PURGE!!"

"YES!!! DIE PARTY BEGIN!!!"

The principal's office door was kicked aside, and out classmates, armed with nailed bats, appear one after another.

“‘BANNING LOVE ALONE ISN'T GOING TO STOP THEM (YOU KNOW)!!’”

Yuuji and I quickly move to the window, open it, and leap out.

“HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! YOSHII! SAKAMOTO!!”

“SWEAR THAT YOU'LL BREAK UP WITH HIMEJI AND KIRISHIMA AT THE EXECUTION PLATFORM!!!”

“WE'LL TORTURE YOU SLOWLY AND KILL YOU IF YOU DO THAT!!”

“WE'LL TORTURE YOU, HEAL YOU AND TORTURE YOU IF YOU DON'T SWEAR THAT!!”

They immediately give chase.

Seriously, this school is—

“This school's not boring at all!”

“That's enough. Let's run Akihisa! They're gonna kill us!”

There's still more than 1 year till graduation.

And it looks our busy days will continue on.

Author's Notes

*This afterword contains materials from the main text. To those readers who have yet to read the main text, please be warned

I am grateful to all who purchased this work. This is the author Inoue Kenji.

What do you think about the series “Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu”?

The first volume was first sold in January 2007, and this volume 12 is released now, in November 2013. It has been 6 years and 10 months; including the anthology volumes, that makes it 17 volumes in all. Suddenly, I realize that this is a really long strong. Will this final volume meet everyone's expectations? If you, when reading, suddenly have thoughts of 'I want such friends and allies', 'I want to try being in this school' and the like, I as the author will be really delighted.

Now then, what follows thereafter is normally the unfunny small talk. This is the final volume though, so I do want to be a little more restrained. This time, I can only use 4 pages for the afterwords, so I guess I should talk about the main story.

First, I do have to apologize. If we compare the Taika Reforms in the first volume and this volume, it currently seems that it's more plausible to say that 'the year isn't 645'. For the sake of making this story uniform, I continued to keep the answer as 645; there's a possibility that there is a mistake in this though, so please do take note of that...now that I mention it, after seeing the changes

in such common knowledge, I realize how much time has passed. The Center Test will probably change in the future too. Time really flew by.

The next thing is Linne-kun, who had quite the meaningful entrance. Everyone has been guessing what sort of role he would take here, but unfortunately, he's just in charge of finishing off the loose ends (?). (He did privately mention before what the principal and Takashiro's 3rd years think about the sponsor, and also about Fumitzuki Gakuen's position, but please do not associate that with this.)

As for the ending, I suppose there are agreements and disagreements with Akihisa's feelings. However, please remember that in fact, Akihisa did want to confess his feelings to Mizuki in the first volume...no? It's because the situation has maintained like this that Minami has such a high standing, right? If Linne-kun is the savior to Minami, he would be the harbinger of doom to Mizuki. Huh? What do you mean about Linne-kun's significance to Hideyoshi? Hm...everyone, please imagine about this yourself. To me, I think that Linne-kun has nothing to Hideyoshi, since I'll feel lonely if Hideyoshi does have a partner. If Hideyoshi does give up the path of drama and take on the role of an idol, that'll be really interesting—but I guess he won't do that even if he's mentally unsound in some way.

Now then, please allow me to go into the customary thanksgiving.

To the illustrator Haga-san, I finally got a cover filled with males that I've been waiting for! The cover illustrations before

these are either those in female outfits or Hideyoshi, but we really got a cover with males this time! I think it's the perfect cover to the final volume of this series. I really thank you very much!

To K-sama, my editor-in-charge, whenever I say 'Sorry that I can't make it this time...' in a feeble manner, you always answer me in such a reliable manner, 'it's fine, don't worry. You'll get there somehow!. You really are very reliable here, and I do feel guilty about how much of the tough work you had to do behind the scenes. Because of this, the series 'Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu' is able to make it till this point. I sincerely thank you.

To the designer Kaguya-san, I really have to apologize for finishing the questions late, and yet you're able to come up with such a wonderful quality work. I do admire how a professional does work.

To all those involved in the comic, anime and game, the world of “Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu” is now filled thanks to your hard work, and has finally reached its end without a hitch. I do feel delighed being able to enjoy this world with everyone else.

And also, to the readers! Because of you, this “Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu” is able to be completed! To me, what's more important than anything else is your existence. I do feel a little apologetic that I received messages like 'I don't want this to end', but I'm also grateful, delighted. I really, really want to thank everyone. Those who read my books, who supported me, and who worked with me.

Finally, I shall talk about some future plans. The next project may be a new work, or may be another anthology of “Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu”. As part of this anthology, I plan to write about the stories Akihisa and the rest go through, and also the characters I couldn't develop in the main story despite introducing them.

Right now, I'm currently discussing with my editor-in-charge over this new series. Will it be a fantasy story with a highly developed world? Or a a love story with unshakeable thoughts? Or a detective story with lots of mysteries to be unraveled? All these ideas are really interesting, so I'm wondering what to write—let's try turning the test and summoned beasts elements in “Baka to Tesuto to Shoukanjuu” to something else and trying writing. A fantasy with a rich world? True love? What're you saying? How can I possibly write such things? I guess I should still write about young boys and girls doing stupid things. That's just my plan for now though. How will it end up? I have no idea.

I really do thank you for accompanying me till now. I hope that we're able to continue meeting again.

あとがき

ついに完結！
長かったような短かったような7年間でした。
お話をいただいた頃はちょうど"マンガ連載デビュー"を
控えており、『イラスト仕事はコレで最後！』という
気持ちで受けたのを覚えています。
それから7年。
力不足を思い知りながらも色々な体験をさせてもらい
本当に充実した年月を送ることができました。
同時期に始まったマンガ連載ももうすぐ最終回、
終わる時期まで一緒で感慨深いものがあります。

デビューから走り続けて最後まで
トップスピードで完走した井上先生。
こちらのわがままにも応えてくださった
歴代の担当編集さん達。
そして見守り続けてくださった読者の皆様方に、
心より感謝いたします。
愛すべきバカ達に幸あれ！

2013.11.

Notes

1. ↑ A boxing move typically used by taller fighters; for some reason, Akihisa, who's shorter than Yuuji, is using this. Also the signature KO move of Mashiba Ryou from 'Hajime no Ippo'
2. ↑ Famous Japanese monk
3. ↑ A mythical Japanese creature, literally means river child
4. ↑ Kore wa watashi no sobo ga aiyou shiteita hondana desu
5. ↑ Kore (this)
6. ↑ Omoi de banasu
7. ↑ ”I am a Cat” is a book written by author Soseki Natsume. If you don't know who he is, please read volume 1 chapter 1 of Biblia Koshodou no Jiken Techou on Baka-Tsuki~
8. ↑ Just a random trivia, but Toshimitsu's seiyuu here is the same as Shiroe of Log Horizon.
9. ↑ This is a call-back to Volume 1, question 8
10. ↑ 1945
11. ↑ The Kan'i Jūnikai (or The Twelve Level Cap and Rank System). For more information [1].
12. ↑ Basically, this question is a rehash of Volume 2, Question 7
13. ↑ Note that this is a rehash of the question from Volume 6, Question 6
14. ↑ Waka, 和, A poem. In modern terms, it would be called a Tanka, , short poem.
15. ↑ A rehash of Volume 1, Final Question